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ONE LIFE,

A NOVEL BY



ONE KOPECK

WALTER DURANTY

[The title, ONE LIFE, ONE KOPECK is a rough translation of the Russian saying, DZIZN KOPEIKA, which means literally, "Life is a little kopeck," or, as we should say, "not worth a rap."]

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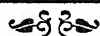
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ONE LIFE,
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EXTENSION

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CHAPTER I

THE FIRST THING that Ivan Petrovich remembered, the first thing in all his life, was the warm sleek side of a sow, the fat rich smell of her, and the squeaks of the little piglet he'd pushed away to make room for him, and the huge woman that tore him away from the sleek warm sow and hit him and said, "You little sookin sin" (son-of-a-bitch), and something about piglets being money and babies a devil's own nuisance. He remembered all that, and the memory stayed with him and helped him and made him strong and cruel, because there are times in a revolution when cruelty is strength. But other things he remembered wrong, like the wide clay floor and roof high as the sky, which was a kennel lean-to on a peasant's hut. And a palace of glory with sounds and smells and colors gorgeous as heaven, which was a small village church. And God Almighty, ruler of men and angels, who was a plump little country squire with a red face and a red waistcoat and a stiff white collar and English riding breeches, named *Nash Barin* (which means Our Master). Those were wrong memories, which hurt and weakened.

Besides that there was the terrible thing, never to be forgotten. A man who lay snoring on the clay floor. Why did he lie on the floor, why not on the bed as usual, the great big bed at the end of the hut, with its roof as high as the sky, where he slept with the woman?

Why did the woman move so cautiously towards him with the ax in her hand?

Why did she say, "You sookin sin, I will teach you to sell our pigs and spend the money on drink and women, you sookin sin, when your kids are hungry."

Was that a true memory or a false memory? Is memory a friend or an enemy? Ivan Petrovich could never forget it, but how did he know whether it was true or false?

After that the woman was gone and the man was gone, and Ivan Petrovich was dressed up in a smart green suit with gold buttons and a collar that pinched his neck, and the Master said, "Run, get this," and the Mistress said, "Run, get that," and he ran till his legs ached. But he slept in a great wide bed by himself (was it a great wide bed or a tiny pallet?) in a great big room (was it a great big room or a tiny attic?). And whether the room was big or small, one thing was certain, he had enough to eat, and he did eat, and went on eating until his buttons got tight and his hands and feet stuck out of his smart green suit, and they brought him a new one.

And Nina Lvovna said to him one day, "Vanusha,

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I want you to kiss me. You are the poor boy in the stories who loves the princess and marries her and lives happily ever after. But I am the princess and can't wait for ever after, so you must kiss me now."

So he kissed her and she was eight years old, the daughter of the Master, and he was ten, her father's page boy, picked up from the gutter. And she said, "I like your kiss, Vanusha, and your eyes are bright like stars, and what do you think of me?"

And he said, "I—I—I—" and then burst into tears and his face went red, and Nina smacked him twice, once on each side of his face, and said, "You stupid little page boy, if your eyes weren't so blue I should ask my father to kill you and cook your flesh in a pot and give it to the dogs. You are the stupidest little boy I ever met, and God will punish you and you will burn in hell forever. And I shall never forgive you and you'll be sorry when you die, so take *that*, you sookin sin," and she kissed him on the mouth so hard that it hurt him.

That was a funny confused memory for anyone to carry on with. And how did the small daughters of noble squires know those dirty words? Or come to act like that?

Then there was traveling on a train, with a great engine that roared like thunder or bellowed like a bull. And the train shook and rattled, and the Young Master said, "Ivan, I am frightened, this is a devil wagon. Say prayers, Ivan, so perhaps maybe God will save us. Say

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prayers, Vanusha, say them quick or I'll beat you to death."

That was a sharper memory, almost true, and how forget the Young Master's pale face, and the silly little verse?

*God keep me safe, I do no wrong;
God keep me safe, this whole night long.*

How many hundred times did he repeat it till the Young Master went to sleep? There were tear marks on his cheeks, the poor scared little son of a noble landlord: didn't he have any guts? Nina wouldn't have cried like that, for nothing. Nina—she smacked my face, damn her, I will kill her one day, she smacked me twice—I will kill her twice—Nina—Nina.

In Petersburg memories became knowledge, clear without doubt or search of one's brain.

School—you must take the Young Master to school, you must share his school, you must *help* him at school, because you are his foster-brother, and he is the Young Master, you must do things for him and help him.

Yes, and what am I? The foster-brother of a piglet? Or is that an old false memory, and what am I? Did Nina kiss me, did I wear a tight green suit with gold buttons, did I see an ax edge rise and fall?

Don't be silly, Ivan Petrovich, you are learning, you are tearing the stuff of Knowledge from her living body. Don't worry about doubts and questions; your

job is to suck the milk of Knowledge, to tear at her breast like a famished child, to learn and learn. Three full years of study, to sharpen with light your peasant dullness, three years to change your thick speech to the clipped fluency of your betters. What matter if at first they mocked you? Your body was stronger than theirs and your will to learn was harder. You wore their uniform and spoke like them, became one of them, and outstripped them at work and play. Until they forgot you were different and you almost forgot it, too. So great is the virtue of knowledge, so sovereign the power of education.

Then one day Mikhail, your Young Master, met the man from the hotel with his album of pictures. Naked girls, rather sweet some of them, with slim legs and beckoning arms. Sweet as honey, just to look at them like fire in the brain.

Mikhail said, "Look, Ivan, look at this one, that's the one I want. Come on, Vanusha, let's go. Come on, I want her."

Mikhail's brown eyes shining—like those other brown eyes of Nina—Mikhail wants the girls, Mikhail is fifteen years old, he wants them, and he calls me Vanusha—my little brother Mikhail, my Young Master, Nina's little brother Mikhail.

Easy little girls, ten rubles—"Herr Graf need not think about money, Herr Graf is here at home"—but Ivan pays. Herr Graf finds "that one," young and sweet like her picture, with beckoning arms, and orders

champagne like a man, and says, "Come on, Ivan, you're my guest tonight. Come on, Ivan, get a girl for yourself and drink champagne, French champagne. Come on, Ivan, tonight I invite you."

Is this the small Mikhail who cried when the train shook and bellowed? Soft young little girls, younger than you, but wiser, soothing love's shyness. Little girls paid for love, smooth little girls, teaching love, cheating love. Little harlots bred to breed bastards, little harpies—or victims.

And suddenly noise in the close dark night, and little girls squeaking like hungry piglets. Loud voices: "In the Czar's name—show your papers, damn you—and don't argue. Counts don't count here, my bucko. Show your papers, or explain in the morning. Ah, you would, would you? All right. . . ."

Ivan heard the wailing of Mikhail, his Young Master. The gendarmes had hit him. The foul beastly gendarmes, police spies, dirty dogs, murderers. They dared to hit Mikhail and hurt him.

The girl said, "Don't be a fool, you're crazy. It's nothing to do with us. Come back to bed and shut up. Come back, darling," she said, "I love you. You're crazy—they'll kill you."

Ivan ran across the hall and hit the nearest gendarme in the eye, and the man fell back. Two others had hold of Mikhail, and a girl was holding him, too, and shrieking.

Ivan caught up a candlestick and smashed the corner against the man's head. "Damn your soul," he said,

"how dare you touch my Master?" And the other one turned and smashed him back with a wooden club—no pain at all, but a blaze of light, then blackness.

So the next morning there were a lot of apologies for the misunderstanding which had involved young Count Mikhail Lvovich in a vulgar brawl, but the peasant boy Ivan Petrovich was sentenced to five years' exile for resisting the police in doing their duties.

Mikhail wrote to his father, and wept, and appealed to the rector of the school, who was shocked, but talked about young blood, and then said firmly, "Your sentiments do you honor, Count Mikhail Lvovich, but you must see it's all the fault of your rascally companion. I warned your noble father—silk purse and sow's ear—a subversive influence. To take you to such a place—police raids—what a scandal! We are well rid of him, I think. I told your noble father. Now leave it to me, Count Mikhail, I personally will arrange it."

So Mikhail left it to him, and his father was away hunting when the letter came and his steward was a little uncertain that time about all letters from Petersburg, because there was something wrong with the accounts and the Petersburg lawyer was a fox, and one never knew. So he burnt them all.

And Ivan went off to Siberia, by foot; all that long way from Petersburg to Tomsk in Siberia.

That was the sharpest of all his memories, because when the march began he was a boy and when it ended, five months later, there was no more boyhood in him.



CHAPTER II

THE YOUNG MAN, Ivan Petrovich Petrov, aged fifteen years and eight months, Number 763, Patrol Number 41, the young man who was a boy no longer, came one night to Yavsina, north of Tomsk, two hundred miles through Siberian woods.

Came limping with a bloody rag round his feet, as the guard let him down from his shoulder, and said, "Now, kid, straighten up, and don't let them know that I helped you. I'm a guard and you're a convict. I'm your guard—and God save the Czar, God bless him, but what have kids like you done to hurt him? I've two of my own at home. Straighten up, kid, and don't tell them I helped you."

"Ho," said the commandant when he saw him, "and what have you done, baby?" and read the paper. He was a tall stiff man with gray hair in a crest like a parrot, and hard gray eyes, a commandant of gendarmes, sent there to guard convicts and all enemies of Our Little Father the Czar, God bless him.

"What have you done, baby?" he said, and caught Ivan as he swayed falling and sat him on the table.

"Bring me some vodka," he said. "Damn it, why do they do this to me? Are they mad or what, to torture children? Damn them," he said, "the boy's feet are bleeding—because he hit a policeman, a fat fool like you, Semyon Vassilich. Would you send your boys here if they hit you with a candlestick? Damn them," he said, "and you, Semyon Vassilich, take him some place where they'll take care of him. Come on, baby, the gendarmes won't eat you. Go with Uncle Semyon, he'll take care of you."

The big guard picked Ivan up again on his shoulder, and carried him out, and said, "You're a lucky one—never in my life did I hear him talk like that. You're lucky, I tell you, d'you know it?" But Ivan didn't answer because he was fast asleep. And when he woke up next day there weren't memories any more; there was just life as it comes to you and you have to live it.

Six hundred convicts cutting down trees, fifty guards in barracks and the two sheds for the convicts, the cookhouse, twenty other houses where the natives lived, and the big house of the commandant, with eight rooms and a bath for him alone: that was Yav-sina. The commandant wanted his camp to be a model. He addressed all the inmates the next day, and said, "I want this camp to be a model. I loathe unnatural vice," he said, "and if I leave you convicts alone, you'll behave like monkeys. I hate that," he said, "and I won't have it. There are eighty women among you and five hundred and twenty men—that doesn't

divide equally, but say one to six. Besides, some of you men are too old to want wives, and some are too sick, and some won't be any good to wives, anyway.

"So now I order that you cut trees and build huts, each for seven people, one wife and six men, and live happily ever after, as God ordained and as I order. And I shall draw lots for you, men and your wives to be, and you may thank God I am a reasonable man and hate unnatural vice."

He drew lots and they were married, as he said, without church or priest. He was Lord and Czar in Yavsina, and when he bade the priest to dine with him, the priest first went to the church and prayed, and then to the bathhouse and washed himself clean, and then back to the church and prayed again, and then round the corner to the old man, the one they called Khaldoon, which means wizard, and gave him money and got from him a charm, and then went to dinner with His Excellency the Commandant. Oh, yes, the priest was wise; he knew the commandant and took no chances, and spoke softly all through dinner, and crossed himself on his way home and thanked his name saint who had saved him from disaster.

The men lived with their wives, six husbands to one wife, and it seemed they were no less happy than husbands and wives elsewhere. The women cooked and cleaned the houses and washed clothes, and the men worked in the woods and made little gardens and grew vegetables. The six men were all attentive to their wife and treated her more politely than a single hus-

band does in Russia, and none of them ever thought of beating her, and she was the center of them all, and so she was happy. "When the wife is happy, the home is happy," says the Russian proverb, and these exiles found it true.

Of course, there were squabbles at first, and questions of preference and precedence. But they had to arrange it, and they did arrange it, and most of them thought the commandant was a pretty wise guy, and they told each other stories they'd heard about other camps, where the commandant had less sense, and dreadful things happened. But the priest thought it was all somehow wrong and immoral and didn't like it at all.

Meanwhile Ivan lived with one of the native families, and wondered about his memories, and read a book. How the book got there, and why Ivan was allowed to read it, is hard to say for anyone who has never been in Russia. Because it was a shocking book, the book of Karl Marx, called *Das Kapital*, and just to own this book would have sent anyone to Siberia. But someone *had* owned it, and taken it to Siberia, and no doubt it had been found somewhere in his bunk and he had been beaten to death, and after that no one had cared much about the book any more, and it lay around until Ivan found it and began to read it.

A terrible and wonderful book it was, like Shakespeare or Rabelais or Voltaire or the Holy Bible. A book to destroy czars and bankers and make gods tremble in heaven. A book to make men think, make

common ordinary ignorant men think, and wonder why.

A damnable, dangerous book, a devastating revolutionary book, long, yes, a long, long book, and heavy, yes, heavy and dull. A long, heavy, dull book in the Jewish manner, just the kind of book to read in the long winter evenings in Siberia when there's no one to talk to and nothing to do. You read it again and again, and suddenly begin to see there is fire and flame in it, like Rabelais and the Bible, and you walk up and down and think about it and wonder—did Marx really know? And was he right? And if so, why are things like this?—and why?—and why?—and how?

Man's whole life on earth is a question, but Marx is a dangerous answer. And sixteen is a hazardous age.

Then one day the commandant sent for Ivan and said, "Well, baby, your cheeks are rounder now, and your feet don't hurt any more, do they? And my orderly has just gone back to Samara because his term is ended, and if you want you can take his place."

His eyes were gray like steel but not so cold, and he licked the corner of his lip. He was Lord and Czar in Yavsina, tall and straight in his blue uniform with its yellow collar. He licked his lip, and his eyes were not cold any more, and he said, "On the books, baby, you're a convict, but I can make you free. You have five years here, on the books, baby, but my orderly gets his relief every year and goes back home, free."

Ivan said yes. He said yes, but he didn't know what

yes meant. How could he, the peasant boy who'd seen the pigs make love and the cows make love and the drakes and ducks and cocks and hens and his father and mother in the big wide home—or was it a lean-to on a peasant's hut?—before that ax fell. He knew what sex meant, he thought he knew, and he had not forgotten that night with Mikhail and the soft little girl who said, "Stop, darling, come back to bed. Are you crazy? They'll kill you." Oh, no, he hadn't forgotten that: he knew what sex meant.

The second night after he was promoted to orderly, the commandant said, "Look, baby, tonight's my birthday, or the Czar's birthday, God bless him, or your birthday, if you ever had one. Anyway, my smooth-faced baby, tonight is a feast night for you or me or someone, and you must drink their health in vodka." And Ivan drank their health in vodka, and liked it, but his head began to feel strange and the room began to move up and down and swing round and round.

Then the commandant put his arm around Ivan's shoulders. . . . Ivan's head was whirling and reeling. Was it he sitting here or someone else? Was the commandant, Lord and Czar, saying strange things to him?

The corkscrew lay on the table.

In with the point of the corkscrew and a twist to thrust it home, and blood bubbling hot on your hands. How strange his eyes look now! Not cold any more, nor soft, but all whites rolled up from underneath—and the blood streaming hot on your hand.

The commandant's eyes were shut. Those cold, hard gray eyes, they were shut now—the commandant was sleepy and wanting to sleep.

But Ivan was wide awake and there were shivers down behind his shoulders. Awake and sober. Vodka is strong but killing is stronger when you are new to it. Ivan was wide awake and coldly sober, stone-cold with the breath of Death on his smooth cheek, stone-cold sober.

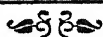
He looked at the watch on the commandant's wrist. What a nice watch, gold, with a gold bracelet! A nice gold watch, with a clasp that's easy to unfasten. Four o'clock. Go slower, dear little watch; the guard comes at six, and the commandant is always punctual. The commandant is a martinet and rules Yavsina by hours and minutes. Are you the commandant, dear little watch? Can't you wait a minute while I think?

Let me think, wait a minute while I—I think the commandant said—the commandant hates unnatural vice, the commandant says. Oh, for Christ's sake, stop ticking, little watch. Darling, sweet little watch, stop ticking and let me think. Yes, of course we must go somewhere. You'll come with me, little watch, you'll come with me, won't you? But I'm so sleepy, why go anywhere? Oh, God, I'm so sleepy, but I can't stay here, that's certain. They'll shoot me like a dog—the dirty gendarmes! Come on, my watch, you're right: it's time for us to go.

Ivan buckled the watch on his wrist and ran out into the forest and kept on running.

He was lucky in the time of the year. If you must kill your commandant in Siberia, or are able to kill him, you are wise—or lucky—to kill him in August, when the woods are so thick they can't see you, and the woods are so dry you can run away from them, and there is no snow to mark your tracks. You have berries to eat, and wild plums, and one day you see a fat rabbit and hit him with a stick. There is blood on your hands, but what do you care for more blood—does the rabbit care? The poor dead rabbit, he's dead, isn't he? And the commandant is dead, the great important commandant, Lord and Czar for Yavsina—and the poor fat rabbit. Hurrah for the rabbit! A hungry boy can eat a rabbit, cooked or raw, but I wouldn't eat that sookin sin of a commandant. I'd sooner starve than eat him. I'd sooner eat a rabbit.

At last one night, when his mouth was dry with thirst and his body shrunk with hunger, Ivan came to a camp of nameless ones, homeless ones, like himself without papers or domicile, exiles and runaways, froth and debris of czarist justice. He stumbled into their camp and fell down, and Hilda Knutovna found him.



CHAPTER III

SHE WAS NO CONVICT, Hilda, but she chose Siberian exile for love, for love of her brother, Knut Cederschiöld, who was exiled for life. A tall girl, taller than Ivan, and stronger, with smooth hair, faintly yellow like flax, cut square round the base of her neck, a skin like milk freckled here and there but not tanned by the sun. A Swede she was from Riga. Her eyes were deep blue like Ivan's and she smelt clean like fresh linen in the big cupboard at the Master's house.

That was his first memory of her, how clean she smelt, like fresh linen, as she gave him soup in her hands holding him up and feeding him soup with a spoon.

"Darling," she said, "you *had* to come back to me. I wanted you so much.

"Darling," she said, "I couldn't live without you. I was desolate and lonely. Drink the soup. See, I'm holding you up. Don't cough now, drink it. That's right. Take some more—some more—what a good darling. You're sleepy—then put your head here—is that right?—on my breast. Now sleep."

Ivan woke in her arms, alert for flight, in terror of anything that held him. Her eyes opened slowly—

last that night she had slept—and her arms tightened. “Little brother,” she murmured, “little brother”—her voice was soft. His muscles relaxed. Where was he? Who was this girl who called him brother?

“I’m hungry,” he said, “I must eat something. I want to eat.” She brought him the bowl of soup and watched him eat it, watched him gulp it down. Then she said, “Well?” just one word and no more, and watched him.

Ivan said, “Well, I killed him, that sookin sin of a gendarme. He tried to do something to me, the commandant, I mean. I wouldn’t stand for it, so I stuck the corkscrew in his throat, and killed him, and I took his watch. Look at it, it’s still going—it’s a good watch. It told me to go, so I went.”

She said, “Little brother, do you want to be my brother?”

Ivan said, “I want some more soup. Can you give me some more soup? Oh, Christ, how hungry I am!”

So she gave him more soup and watched him gulp it down.

Then she cried wildly, “My brother was a murderer, and you are a murderer; there is blood on your hands, there was blood on my lap. But your eyes are blue, my little brother murderer. Will you be my little brother?”

Before Ivan could answer she caught his head to her breast and kissed his mouth.

She was too strong for him, the Swedish girl; he was weary still and weak with hunger. She sucked away his strength, the little strength he had. Her lips were

hot and her arms were strong and he was tired, so terribly tired. No, let her kiss him—kiss or kill—she could kill him if she wanted. She was strong and he was weak: let her do whatever she wanted.

“What’s your name?” she asked, and he told her Vanusha, Nina’s name, and Mikhail’s name, the name that was kept for them. Why say it now?

“Vanusha,” she said more calmly, “I like that name, Vanusha, my little brother. I was lost and alone till you came, Vanusha, my brother Vanusha.” There was nothing hateful in her voice, he knew that. She could use his name, their name for him.

“Vanusha,” she said, “little Ivan, my little brother. Oh, Ivan, I was so lonely till you came, but now I’m happy.”

That was their meeting—the boy of sixteen and the girl of eighteen—the two of them who had suffered so much in their tender youth, in their young tender sensitive time when sensations are sharp like knives, when pain hurts most on the tender flesh of youth. They had been hurt, both of them, but both were young and they healed each other. They told each other their hurts and the pain of their lives and how life had hurt them. And found balm in the telling.

Ivan told her his story, all of it, and his memories, all of them, even the worst one about the ax that fell. And she told him Knut’s story, the story of Knut Cedarschiold, her brother.

They’d taken him eight years before, in 1905, in

Riga, with a dozen other students at the university, for a plot to kill the Chief Prosecutor, who was shot in the foyer of the theater. The boy who shot him got away in the crowd, but was traced and they took the lot of them.

Guilty, of course, so why bother—why not hang them quick, these crazy kids, devil kids, anarchists, revolutionaries? But someone wanted to know with whom were they linked. What was it all? How deep did it go? Who had set them on? Who organized them?

So they went through the "Riga Museum," the unlucky thirteen of them. It got quite a name, that museum did, and was written up in American papers, and in Germany and England.

Knut Cedarschiold could tell you there were curious things in that museum, like the things they have in Nuremberg, and the Tower of London, and in Holland to remember the Duke of Alva and the Spanish Inquisition by. Interesting museum pieces, things of wood and metal, devised to make stubborn prisoners docile and silent prisoners talk.

They put Knut's fingers one by one in the jamb of a heavy oak door—Knut Cedarschiold, Hilda's brother, nineteen years old, student of the second year—and closed it slowly. Not the whole of his fingers, just the ends, each finger, one by one, for eight days, one day after another. But he would not talk—the Swedes are stiff and proud. Also, he fainted each day from pain, and that fooled them. After the fifth day they

took hours to revive him, but they did it carefully. He lived in a haze of pain, but he would not talk.

The rest of them were Letts, all save one, whose parents were Greek. Swedes are proud and stiff, Letts are tough and resistant. They are cruel themselves, and they've borne cruelty. They know it as a woman knows her lover; they've learnt to bear it as a woman bears her child. They didn't talk, didn't even faint more than once or twice. They just set their teeth and bore it, or cursed the Russian gendarmes with filthy Russian words.

Hilda stopped for that, stopped her story to read Ivan a lecture. "You Russians are dirty people," she said. "The words on your lips are foul like the dirt you live in, like the air in your stinking prisons, like your unwashed bodies in the cattle cars you travel in. Sookin sin is a word like yes or no to you, and the dreadful word about your mothers—you all use it and care nothing. You are strange, you Russians. Your eyes are clear and clean, and your minds are clean though not clear, but your tongue is a pigsty of foulness."

Ivan replied, "We are sons of pigs; a pig was my nurse," and Hilda said, "There, you see, at once you talk riddles. Is there no one among you with simple words and straight thoughts to be your leader?"

(There was one, a little square man with a sandy beard, sitting then at a table in Paris, writing fast but not so fast as his thoughts, making mistakes in his writing that was too slow for his thoughts, and stopping to

correct them, writing sheet after sheet to the end, then signing his name, without a flourish: LENIN.)

But Hilda did not know that, so she went on with her story.

This Greek, it seemed, was no Spartan: they only crushed one fingernail before he talked, and told them true or false, but what they wanted. He told them more each day, as he found what they wanted, told them false or true. "I'll tell you anything you want, if it will save my fingers from the door," he said.

After eight days, he had told enough, so they spared Knut's thumbs, and the Letts' thumbs.

The Letts thought that was a lucky break, but Knut was past knowing what he thought. Knut was in hell on a gridiron of pain, with small dancing devils stabbing his fingers with barbed tridents. The Letts sucked their smashed fingers and said, "Well, you can't blame Gregory Mavrovich—he comes from the south, where people are soft. You can't blame him for talking."

They were tried by a military tribunal, which knew its business and wasted no time. Half an hour to read the indictment, prisoners standing. Ten minutes inquiry, less than a minute per student, on trial for his life. The president said, "No need to retire—the facts are evident. I shall read the verdict."

The Letts sucked their fingers and watched with eyes of hate. Russian tribunals, German barons, one day there would come an end, and a payment, blood for blood, one day, some day.

The Greek's face was gray. Would they keep their promise? "If you talk, you won't hang, we shall hang the rest, but not you, not if you talk. Will you talk, or shall we shut the door a little more?"

Knut Cedarschiold sat smiling. What a rainbow of color in that window as the sun struck it, what music in the president's voice, like a dance of harps and angels! What restful ease in his veins, with each beat of blood that was now a baton to guide celestial music, when before each beat was a flame of pain! What ease and happiness and rest from pain! What rest from pain. What happiness to rest from pain!

The prison doctor was hard enough, but he knew his job. They'd told him, "Fix that one up to attend the tribunal. The president wants them all there, so you must fix him up."

How easy, didn't he know it? Just the prick of a needle, just the little love bite of the Poppy Goddess: didn't he know her and love her? "Hm, only a small dose for this one; yet, his heart— Oh, well, say ten centigrams. There now, you'll thank me. Don't thank me, thank morphine."

So Knut sat smiling.

But the Letts jerked up rigid, and forgot their aching fingers. Not death, did he say? Not death, not death before dawn by hanging? Exile, exile for life, Siberia, exile for life, for life, not death.

A chance for revenge, thought the Letts; all eleven of them thought the same quick, cruel thought. A chance to live, and perhaps, just a chance, a chance to

pay back, to pay these bloody Russians blood for blood and pain for pain.

The president was thinking, too, thinking different from their thought. "I won't take chances," he thought, "not again I won't, but how could I know? They tell me to stamp out revolution, to squash them like flies, to stamp it out with an iron heel. How could I know that other boy had friends at court? My God, what a life! They tell you to hang them in batches and then say, 'How dared you hang that one? Didn't you know?' How could I know?"

"'Be careful,' they said, 'be very careful in future. The Empress herself—the boy was a cousin—whose cousin was he? And how could I know? But I won't take chances, not again I won't. No, no, my young friends, you're lucky. You don't know it, but you're lucky. Look at that one now with the fair hair, he's laughing at me. Yes, he has friends at court, too. He can afford to laugh, friends with pull and money. Oh, God, if I had pull or money! You can laugh, young man. They won't hang you in the morning, and if you do go to Siberia, I suppose you'll come back quick.'"

So the judge, who had made a mistake before and sent to death a boy who had friends at court, friends who might harm a judge who needed promotion and pull and money, that wise judge took no chances this time and gave them life instead of death. But Knut Cedarschiold had no friends at court and never came back from Siberia.

Some of the others came back, some of the hard-

faced Letts with mutilated fingers, and one of them had the pleasure, on Christmas Day, 1918, of shooting that same judge as he sat eating roast turkey with his family. The Lett's fingers were ugly and unnatural to look at. But good enough to pull a trigger, as the judge found out when the bullet tore the back of his head off and he bowed his face into the turkey in front of him, his own fat Christmas turkey from his own estate, and his blood mixed with the rich fat gravy, and slopped out over the plate onto the tablecloth.

But Knut Cedarschiold had no friends at court, so they sent him to Siberia. There something went wrong with him, and after a year or two he began to cough. He had no friends at court and his father was dead and his mother's heart was broken. There was no one save Hilda and she was a child. Only a child she was, but a brave child, proud and stiff as Swedes are.

When Hilda was old enough she left her mother, who did nothing but sit and wail for her lost son, and did nothing but wail and weep when his letters came so rarely, saddest of all letters because they tried to be cheerful, and how be cheerful in Siberian exile when your lungs are rotting?

Hilda could bear it no longer. She was a strong girl of hard Swedish blood, trained to boxing and wrestling like a man, with the inner contempt for death or life that comes to those who live in the north, contempt and carelessness for what southern people think important. And now she was eighteen, a child no longer, and lonely.

She gave this, or she gave that, but in the end she had her way and they let her go. Went in a train, and hired a sleigh and drove through the woods. Drove through the woods to find her brother, laughing at this one and flirting with that one, drove on till she found her brother, paying out pieces of gold from the heavy bag, set on one thing only, to find and save her brother.

Found him, Knut Cedarschiold, Number 45701, Patrol Number 92, in a stinking wooden hut, covered with lice, coughing blood from his lungs, all fever and bones, hot skin sweating with fever heat, sharp bones aching with fever. Yes, but she had the bag of gold, gold to bribe guards, gold to buy sleighs and food, gold to buy freedom.

Gold and her body—her gold and her beauty—to buy her brother's freedom. Easy and cheap, for Knut's freedom. But who can buy off Death, or make bargains with tuberculosis?

His lungs were rotten; her spirit could not save him. He was tired and wanted to sleep. He was tired and ready to die. She could not save him. She could arrange his escape and get him away through the forest, but his lungs were rotten, and there was a red flush on his cheeks, and one day he coughed worse and choked up blood on her lap as she held his hand—and choked—and died.

Three months in the woods with the homeless band—and Knut died in her arms. She'd believed in God, not the Orthodox Russian God, but the Lutheran

Swedish God, and she'd trusted her God to save Knut's life and somehow bring him home. Her big brother who had always been her hero, her brother Knut who lay there dead.

How gauge the pain in her heart, when she must bury him herself? Dig the grave and bury him deep lest the wolves tear his body. Bury him deep. Oh, Knut, my brother, why did you leave me? I have done all I could for you, Knut darling. I didn't care what it was. I did what I could for you, Knut, my brother. Why couldn't you stay with me, Knut? Why leave me who came so far to find you? Oh, Knut, my brother, my darling, your blood spilt red on me, and I would give my blood for you. Oh, Knut, why did you leave me when I came so far to find you?

She was frantic with loss and longing, not able to sleep, on the move all night, walking up and down, her life desolate, its mainspring broken. A lovely girl, made for love, strong and beautiful, made for love and to breed strong children. But lonely, not seeing men, nor caring, with blank eyes that told the men to keep away. There were twenty men there in the homeless band and only two other women, but Hilda's eye kept them away. How could they speak to her of love, when her heart was buried? She had buried it herself in Knut's grave, and she herself was dead though she walked among the living. Walked day and night, and never slept—she could not sleep.

Then God sent her Ivan when she was desperate

and bereft of hope. She'd believed in God, with a stiff, proud, Swedish faith—and Ivan came stumbling through the forest and fell to the ground.

She heard a small moaning noise like a child in pain, and it checked her stride. She strode up and down like a man, with free wide strides, a strong girl, strong like a man, too strong to die. Her stride was checked and she listened, heard a small moaning noise in the moonlight. She ran quickly and found him, a shrunken boy with parched mouth, dying of hunger and thirst.

How golden the night she found him, how bright and shining the stars! How benignant her Swedish God with his long white beard—how divine and full of pity!



CHAPTER IV

A YEAR they lived in the woods like brother and sister, not where Hilda found him in the refugees' camp—they left that when Ivan was strong enough to travel—but in a remote village with only a dozen families who lived peacefully hunting and fishing and tilling two hundred acres of good land that sloped down to the river, out of sight of the Czar and his justice. Hilda taught him to speak German and to box and wrestle and swim, and from the hunters he learned to shoot straight and quick, and his body grew and hardened. Of set purpose Hilda trained his mind to the shape of her Western thought and cleansed it of Slavic vagueness and muddy exuberance. He was an apt and eager pupil and learnt so fast that one day she asked him wonderingly, "Were you really a peasant boy, Vanusha? I cannot quite believe it. You don't look like a peasant or talk like one, and you reason so straight and sure. There were students at Riga University who knew much less than you."

"Don't forget," he said, "that I had over three years at the Academy in Petersburg with my Young Master.

ONE LIFE, ONE KOPECK

It was a good school and I worked hard, and you have taught me more than you suppose. I've learned more in these months with you than in all the years at school. And I don't even think like a Russian any more. I think like you, like a foreigner. I was a peasant once, but you have given me a foreign mind and taught me how to think."

Then one day when Ivan was seventeen a man came to them as they were cutting wood in a clearing a mile from the village and told them there was war in Europe, that Russia was at war, and France and England, against Germany, for many months. The man was tall and he limped with a stick. His hair and beard were white like wool, but his eyes were young and the skin on his neck and cheeks was firm and ruddy. They loaded the wood on a sleigh, for the brief winter light was fading, and he sat on it; then dragged him through the snow along the narrow trail to their wooden hut with its fireplace of clay and stone.

"It is good," he said when they told him of the people in the village. "I can stay then and rest a while, for I am weary and have far to go. But you, how came you here?"

"I escaped from Yavsina," said Ivan simply.

The man's eyes widened. "I have heard," he said. "You killed that filthy gendarme and got clear away. Well done indeed, young comrade—you have started well. And you?" He turned to Hilda.

"I rescued my other brother," she told him, "from Tungat farther north. We too got away, but—he died."

The man nodded. "I have heard," he said again, "the Riga group, our Lettish comrades. Then you are Hilda Knutovna, but this boy is no kin of yours?"

"My brother by adoption," said Hilda, with her hand on Ivan's shoulder, "my little brother Ivan, who is now grown big and strong." She took the pot from its bed of charcoal and threw fresh sticks upon the fire. "Come," she said, "let us eat. Then we shall ask you questions."

"There is no need," said the man. "I bear the answer with me." He threw off his heavy coat and slipped the blouse up his back to the shoulder. His flesh was seamed with blue ridges, crisscrossed like a twice-plowed field. "That tells you," he said, "and this"—he tapped his twisted foot. "This was the first time I escaped; they caught me and broke it with a rifle butt, for a lesson. The knout was the second time. They gave me the full dose, but I lived, and later I tried again. That time I lay sick nine months—a second knouting is death, they say, but I wouldn't die. I have work to do. I lay and gathered my strength and the comrades helped. One brought soup from the officers' mess, another stole drugs from the doctor, and slowly I mended.

"It is hard to hop with a stick," he said, "when escape means running and days of march through the woods. It is hard, but the comrades helped—they knew

I had work to do and they had their orders. The Party abroad sent orders—I was needed; there was war in the air, the war for which we had waited. It cost lives and much trouble. It is hard for a cripple to escape, but what are hardship and lives when the Party orders?

"It was done," he said, and his voice throbbed. "There were three of us—old comrades—and I was a cripple to hold them back, but they had their orders. I was needed, so they stayed and died—not for me, but for the Party. And I escaped, because war has come," he cried, aloud and ringing. "War has come, the great war that will break them—the bloody bandits, the czars and priests and landlords and bosses and gendarmes, the whole crew of them. At last the war has come." His eyes were shining and he stood erect before them, not old or crippled but strong and young.

"A short while I rest here with you," he said, "if you will have me, comrades. They will not care, these neighbors of yours. They are better than the refugees. Those others know nothing. They snap like wolves at the hand that seeks to hold them, are swift to tear and run, but soft like sheep in their minds. Soft like sheep without leaders, knowing nothing—luckless wolf-sheep, our leaderless people of Russia. But the time is coming, the time is coming, when the wolf-sheep people of Russia will turn and rend their masters. And we shall give them leaders, we Bolsheviks. We shall lead them to kill their masters and to break what their masters have built."

"Marx says that," said Ivan. "Marx says a day will

come when all slaves will rise and kill their masters, all the slaves of Capital will rise and take everything for themselves."

"My God!" the man shouted. "From the mouths of babes. . . . And where, young comrade, did you hear of Marx?"

Ivan told him, told him of the school in Petersburg, and the Young Master and the brothel, of Yavsina and the book he read there, and the commandant who loathed unnatural vice.

The man listened with bright attentive eyes, young eyes shining in the firelight. It was silent in the forest save where branches split cracking from the cold. They were far and aloof from the world, the three of them talking together in the warm hut.

The man listened till Ivan finished, but before he could speak Hilda said, "Tell me, what is this Party you speak of, and who are 'we,' 'we Bolsheviks,' and who are you?"

"You may call me Druzak," he said. "My name doesn't matter. I have many names, and none of them matter, and I don't matter. But the Party, the Bolshevik Party—that matters, I can tell you."

And he told them, all night, told Ivan what Marx meant, what he meant for Russia. Told Hilda what the Party meant, and meant to do. Told them both what it meant to him and might mean to them. In his mouth words took shape; he was a master of words, and he used them at his pleasure, freely; his words obeyed him. His words were the servants of his thought

—neat, efficient servants to carry his thought and evoke their thoughts to meet it.

All that night he talked, and then they slept, and were drowsy all day. The man was tired. Hilda and Ivan were bewildered.

The next night he talked little, but he answered their questions until they saw through his eyes, saw clearly what he saw as he saw it. Saw what Marx meant, and why; saw what the Bolshevik Party meant; saw the meaning of czarist oppression, and masters and schools and brothels and gendarmes and Siberian exile; saw the meaning of wars and what war meant for Russia. All this they saw, and they blazed with the fire of Youth that sees and begins to know what it did not know or thought to see before.

The man was wiser than they, and older, and had mastery over words. He was crippled and weary and needed rest and had work to do. He had no time for the sheep-wolves, but he gave himself to these two because they were Youth; they were the Future he must conquer.

Each day they fished through the ice and snared ptarmigan and rabbits in the wood. There was plenty of game that year—there'd been fires farther north that had driven it down—and they dried the flesh in the smoke as their neighbors had shown them. Druzak rested and wrote in a book and watched them with wise eyes. They worked in eager haste, running out at daybreak to their traps and fishlines, to come back

panting at dusk with a load of food, skinning and plucking and cleaning, then smoking the flesh.

Druzak watched them, and judged them. He knew the strength of cruelty and hate, and he saw that Ivan's heart was hard like flint. He knew the strength of discipline and courage, and he saw that Hilda ruled herself and had taught Ivan to rule himself. And he saw the comradeship between them, and he was glad. He wanted men, not wolves.

So the fifth day he said quietly, "When we go," not as before, "when I go," and they both jumped round and faced him.

"You mean you'll take us," cried Ivan and Hilda. "We'd hoped—"

"Of course," said Druzak smiling, "if you want to come. But look well before you leap. You are safe here and there's a price on both your heads. Here you play Crusoe in the forest, but there you will be playing on Death's doorstep."

"And you?" said Ivan. "Do you fear death?"

"He's different," said Hilda quickly. "For him there's neither fear nor unfear; he has no choice, he—"

"Good girl," flashed Druzak. "I'm a Party member. I do what I'm told, for life or death, as the Party orders, like a soldier."

"All right," said Ivan, "we enlist. Will you swear two new recruits, comrade captain?"

The man eyed them steadily, as they stood before

him together like two tall boys in their wolfskin coats and breeches. "Yes," he said, "I will."

They moved fast through the wood, the two of them pulling the sled where Druzak sat to rest his foot, going south by his little compass, avoiding villages and towns, but it was a month before they came to an open space on the top of a hill and saw the lights of a train in the valley. They camped there and Druzak lit a torch and made signals at midnight.

"This is the place," he said. "Each night the comrades are watching; in the morning they will come and we shall know what to do."

Next morning they saw a man and a woman with sacks gathering sticks. They climbed the hill and crossed the open space into the shelter of the trees and whistled a bar of a tune, which Druzak continued, and they ran to join him.

"Good luck, Fedotov," Druzak shouted. "I was long in coming, but I'm here at last," and the man wrung his hand, saying, "Splendid, splendid," and "This is Comrade Vera. But you are only three," he added. "We expected four."

"Only one," said Druzak, "the others are dead, and these are two new ones I gathered on the way. This is a girl, Hilda; that is Ivan. I trust them." His voice was cool and hard.

The man and woman shook their hands, and Vera said simply, "Was Alex with you?"

"Yes," said Druzak. "He died first, shot right through the head, instantly. It gave me time to get started. You see," he added slowly, "I can't run fast any more."

"It gave you time," Vera repeated, "it gave you time to escape. That is good, but I wish Alex might have known it—he was my husband," she told Hilda.

"Soon or late," said Fedotov, "but the main thing is that you're here. They need you badly in Petersburg; each week they ask for news of you. The war, it seems, drags slowly. There were victories and shouting at first, then a great defeat, and now it sways to and fro in Poland. The Germans stormed to Paris, were checked and retreated, and the line stretches out across northern France to the sea. They need men there, so Warsaw waits like a ripe plum. In the south the Austrians retreated, which balanced defeats in the north. The war is still popular in Petersburg, wages have risen, there is work for all, and food in plenty. I have reports for you here."

All day they talked and planned until Druzak said, "All right, then, it is decided. Hilda and I will take a train for Petersburg, as the merchant and his son—you have the clothes and the passes? Yes, that's good. And this young man you speak of, where can Ivan find him? And will he keep his mouth shut?"

"Trust him," said Fedotov, "and his girl, too; they will jump at the chance. I can go now and warn them. They meet each night by the mill."

"No, let Ivan go alone," said Druzak. "If they know

you, there is danger. And if anything goes wrong, Ivan can bolt through the woods and swing back here down to your farm. Is that right, Ivan?"

"Of course," said the boy, "I can fix it alone. But what shall I do in the army, Comrade Druzak?"

"Learn to be a soldier and fight, learn all you can of war; that's enough for the present. And later we shall tell you. But now, just a good obedient soldier, who keeps his mouth shut. And so good-bye and good luck, comrade. We shall meet again," he said. "I know that—I always know."

Fedotov and Vera shook his hand and wished him luck, but Hilda said, "Can I go with him halfway? Will you wait for me?" And Druzak said, "Yes."

She slipped her arm through his and caught his hand, her own cold and trembling. "Did you see her," she said, "when Druzak spoke about her husband? Her face never changed at all, or her voice. I can never be strong like that. But perhaps," she added, "she didn't love him, or care much."

"Her fingers twisted so that she tore a piece of skin off with her ring," said Ivan. "I think she cared all right, but they are strong, aren't they?—not like Russians at all. It's wonderful to think that we—"

"Are you glad to go?" she whispered. "Vanusha, little brother."

"Don't," he said. "Of course I'm glad, but why not let us go together, as you suggested? You're as strong as a man, you're stronger than I. They'd never have known. Oh, Hilda, it burns me to leave you."



CHAPTER V

IVAN SKIRTED round the village in the darkness, doubtful like a dog that has lost its master, until he saw the vanes of the mill make wings against the sky.

Near a barn he heard voices, a man low-murmuring, soothing, a woman plaintive and rebellious. "You shall not go," she said. "Why should you go? You must not go—I need you, Sergey, and the beasts need you; the grain and the land need you—you cannot go."

The man said sadly, "I know, but the order is plain. It says here is war, that we young men must go to fight for the Czar and Holy Russia against the pagan Turks and the cursed English."

Ivan heard him spit, and heard the reluctance in his voice.

"You shan't go," said the girl, "I can't bear it. To hell with the Czar and the English," and the man said, "Hush."

Then Ivan came forward. They were sitting on a log, close-embraced, and the man started when he saw Ivan, but the girl held him fast, so Ivan spoke to her.

"If I go instead," he asked, "then you keep your Sergey? How is that?"

"Yes," she said, "and your price?" They say Russian peasants are stupid, but those who say it don't know Russian peasants.

"No price," said Ivan, "none that you can pay or know of. Oh, yes, Sergey's order. I must take that to answer the draft in his name."

"Aha," said the girl, "and how did you escape, and from what prison camp, young man who wears wolfskins?"

"You're smart," said Ivan, and quoted a dirty Russian proverb. "You're smart, little sister, and now my price is higher. Your boy must take my wolfskins. He can wear them out for me and give me clothing in exchange lest the officers suspect. Now, Sergey, speak up, will you go to the war or make a deal with me?"

"Who are you?" said the man, and Ivan answered, "Didn't you hear what she said? I'm a lost one, a nameless one, a wanderer in wolfskins, a crazy man who wants to go and fight. Give me your coat and trousers and your draft paper, and I will go and you can stay. Is that right, sister?"

The girl said, "Yes, be quick, Sergey; strip and change before he asks a bigger price."

Ivan took the paper—Sergey Sergeyich Torov, nineteen years old, son of peasant, illiterate, to report on January 15th to the commandant at the township for military service. By order of the Czar.

He took the coat and trousers and the bread and cheese they gave him. He took the girl's kiss of parting. "Since you go to death I'll kiss you. . . ."

"What's your name?" said Ivan. "My name, our name, Sergey Torov? All right, brother Sergey, we shall meet again, and you too, sister. I am charmed from death," he told them, "and I take your death upon me. You won't die, either, brother Sergey, and one day I shall return and ask from you a price of life and death."

He went to the township and reported and no one asked questions, and they drilled them for two weeks, a hundred raw recruits, and then he was in a cattle car moving west—ever west. Days and nights of rumble and bump and stop and start. A Russian troop train, lousy and stinking but warm, with food to eat, strong meat soup and bread in plenty. Better than limping on foot as the convicts go, better than peasant's fodder.

The sixth day on the train a young officer, spick and span in well-cut uniform, told Ivan, "Say you, what's your name, Sergey Sergeyich, I need an orderly. Move your truck from your pigsty to the officers' car, and tell them you're my orderly."

Ivan looked at him and said, "No."

The other stared back in anger, "Why not?"

"I'm a soldier," said Ivan, "not your lackey." He would have said worse but he read the young man's eyes—by orderly he meant soldier servant, not what the commandant of gendarmes meant at Yavsina, Ivan saw that.

"All right," said the officer, "that's all right, and what's-your-name, you'd better be corporal from now

on and keep these pigs clean. What is your name, did you say?"

And Ivan said, "Ivan Petrovich, my lieutenant, whatever the paper says," and, "Yes, I'll keep them in order."

At last they reached the front-line trenches before Warsaw. That was a hard war they had to fight, to sit in a filthy ditch, with one rifle amongst five men and wooden clubs for the others. And the German guns blasted them with shells that burst and tore, tore men and trenches to pieces, but their own guns were silent. They could hear the German shells coming, a low whine, a loud scream, and a roar like thunder. But their guns were silent—there were no fountains of smoke and flame in the German lines. They could see the Germans walk about, but if they put up their heads a bullet brought quick death.

Ivan talked to the young lieutenant and talked with an old sergeant, and they said the same thing in different ways.

"War's like that," said the sergeant. "You have more than they have or less. In the old days there were two mores, more men and more food; if you had those you won. That's how we beat the Turks and the English and the French emperor, long ago. But now there are new mores—more shells, more guns, more rifles, and these blasted machines that fly over you and signal back to tell them where to fire their shells. Of those we have none—ah, my God, poor Holy Russia!"

The lieutenant said, "What counts in war nowadays

is technique and industrial equipment. They have guns and shells, and airplanes and maps and transport. They have training and knowledge. They are one to five against us, but *they* know and we are ignorant; *they* see and we are blind; their guns roar death and ours are silent. What chance has stupid man power against well-equipped technique?"

One day the Germans attacked, or perhaps it was only a raid to test the Russian resistance. An hour before dawn there came a sudden hurricane of noise and flame. The Russians lay in their ditch while stones and splinters of hot iron and chunks of earth rained on them and the ground shook. Ivan was startled and stunned, but felt no fear, which made him pleased with himself. It was so good to have no fear that he began to like it and feel excited. This was living indeed, so close on the edge of dying—what Druzak had said, "Playing on Death's doorstep."

The storm ceased and the lieutenant yelled to Ivan, "Here, quick, help me clear this gun—they'll be on us." They tugged the machine gun out from the earth that buried it and ripped off the cover. At once it began banging like a man hitting a tin roof with a hammer, but faster than any man could bang.

Ivan saw the Germans now in the smoky twilight—dim figures five or six yards apart, slowly trotting forward. They were fifty yards away, the nearest. What easy shooting, too easy to be fun! He shot four quick—what's that one doing? He's stopped—ah, the devil!—too late, but I've got him too—as the man hurled a

grenade with its handle like a tail. Ivan watched it, dropping right upon him, and threw himself sideways flat on his face. A loud roar and a blow in the back—was he hit? His hand flew seeking, and found a stone. "Carry on," shouted the lieutenant, "quick, I'm—I'm hurt—I can't—" The hammer had stopped beating. Ivan jumped, there was a German five yards away slashing at the wire with a chopper. He flung the stone in his hand right in the man's face and saw him fall backwards. There were others, but the lieutenant's revolver was banging now; they were down save one, who turned back, running. He heard the lieutenant curse as the pin clicked on an empty chamber, but there were no more Germans in the field before him. Hurrah, they were beaten, his stomach was on fire—he wanted to shout and dance.

"Help," called the lieutenant.

Ivan jumped over three bodies, saw more beyond, then a group of soldiers standing dazed.

"Man the gun," he shouted, "and pick up rifles. They may come again."

The young officer was lying in the ditch with closed eyes. The revolver was clutched in his right hand and his left arm below the elbow was like a piece of raw meat with white points of bone sticking out. There was no hand at all, but blood pumped out between the bone splinters in thin jets, so he was not dead.

Ivan pulled up the torn sleeve, wrenched a strip from the shirt with his teeth. "It's lucky for you you wear a shirt, Young Master"—now why did he call him that?

—and twisted it round the arm with a pebble on the vein as Hilda had shown him when he cut his foot. There, that was better, he'd stopped the little pump.

The sergeant's voice rang out loud as he rallied the men. His face was pale and blood trickled down from a bloody bandage round his head, but his voice was firm and loud.

"Take him back," he yelled to Ivan. "Can you carry him? Make haste, he's the colonel's nephew, and his father's a general. Make haste, I tell you."

So Ivan carried him, stumbling, through half a mile of trench. He was utterly weary now, and hollow inside, as if the strength had been sucked out of him, but he carried him round the hill to battalion headquarters, cut into the hillside with a porch of sloping wood, and laid him on the bench under the porch, and fell senseless. The hot bite of vodka revived him and he coughed and choked.

"That's enough," said a voice, "don't waste it. Stand up, man, and salute."

Ivan rose and saluted a captain with puffy yellow cheeks, small hard eyes, and a yellow bristle of beard. "Pigface" the men called him.

"How dare you desert the trench in action to play porter for corpses?"

"The sergeant ordered—the lieutenant was alive—he—"

"Don't answer me, you sookin sin; you knew he was dead and you skulked away. I know you slick peasant bastards. You can't fool me. I'll teach you."

He hit Ivan hard in the face, left fist, then right, and knocked him down, and cried, "Kick him back to his trench," and turned round into the hill. Ivan leaped, flaming, but strong arms held him.

"Steady there, brother, you're mad. Don't they whip the boys in your village? Here, take a drink and forget it. Lord Pigface is sore 'cause the kid got killed while he shirked here in the dugout, and they'll rub his chops in the muck, never fear, when the Old Man finds out. That's it, now swallow it down, and take the bottle with you." The sentry's voice was kind, and he loosed his grip.

"Drink first," said Ivan, and he drank. Ivan took the bottle, a small one it was, half-pint, and let the hot spirits run down his throat, then dashed it to pieces on a stone. "And the same to him one day," he said, "the same to him."

The sentry laughed. "You're a hot one, don't you know this army yet?"

"I've killed better men today than that—"

"Well, lay off him, brother, he's a bad one, and now get back and chew on this and forget it," he thrust a hunk of bread and sausage into Ivan's hand, "and thank your saint you're alive to serve the Czar, God bless him." He saluted stiffly.

So Ivan went back to his trench with a swollen nose, but he gave no thanks to saints or prayed God to bless the Czar. The sergeant cursed when he heard the lieutenant was dead, but he thought Ivan's story a

good joke. "Serves you right," he said, "for talking back to an officer. Don't you know that yet?"

"But he asked me, and you ordered, and he was alive."

"That makes no odds, you should have known better and it's lucky for you the captain's back was turned and Grisha's a good fellow. You owe him more than a bottle of vodka, my lad, by a long shot."

And that was that, and that was the way in the army.

After that they retreated, no one knew why, because the Germans didn't attack again, and they marched one night through the woods, where the snow was trodden hard and slippery, to a railway station, where Sisters of Mercy with white veils and red crosses sewn on their breasts gave them bread and soup and tea with cherry jam, and they stood all morning on the platform, shivering despite the food and their heavy coats. When the train came it was full of soldiers, but their battalion was down to four hundred; many were killed or wounded, and there'd been much sickness, so they hitched on extra cars and another engine to push, and steamed off southward for days and days.

Down here it seemed they were beating the Austrians and the town where they detrained had been taken from the enemy. Here they rested and a new draft brought them up to strength again and they went forward by easy marches, till at last they heard guns

ahead, low at first, "put-a-put," then louder, "put-put-boom."

Ivan felt better. His new lieutenant was a tough middle-aged man from the Caucasus, dark and surly but always watchful that the men got food and rest, and the captain might have been his twin, though younger. And both of them were soldiers, sticklers for drill and discipline. Pigface had stayed behind in the captured town.

Once they attacked, and this time the Russian guns roared loudest, then the whistles blew, and they ran forward—damn this slush, why must it thaw right now? Why don't the enemy fire? Are they holding their fire until we get quite close?

But there was no enemy. The Austrian trenches were empty, and the Russians swept on in a straggling mass.

Then Ivan saw something few men did see in the Great War, even on the Eastern Front, an old-style cavalry charge. There was a wood ahead of them half a mile or more to the left, and round the far side of it came a column of horsemen, the sun flashing on their lance heads and the officers' sabres. They wheeled fan-wise into line and rode down on the Russians like thunder. There must have been a thousand of them, and the Russians three times more, but spread out in open order across the plain. In a moment it seemed the blue-clad horsemen were spearing and slashing and riding men down.

Now Ivan's company found out what it means to be

led by soldiers, and was repaid for the drill and discipline it had cursed so heartily. While the rest of the line wavered and broke and tried vainly to run from the long sharp lances, the captain and lieutenant from the Caucasus stood barking orders like angry dogs, and Ivan and the rest were down on their bellies snapping trigger and bolt as fast as their rifles would let them, and behind them, away to the right, a machine gun was clattering death. None too soon their rally, for the charge was near them now, a hundred yards, eighty—they could see the red mouths of the horses and the wild Hungarian faces. But the lancers were dropping fast, as the quick fire caught them. Their course deflected leftward upon the main body of the fugitives and broke order, each lancer choosing his man to chase and stick like a pig. Suddenly, far to the left, the staccato of more machine guns, and the fight was over. Like birds that gather to fly to their roost, the lancers came round and together and rode for the wood, and were gone. Their losses had not been light, but they'd checked the Russian attack and given their infantry time to escape from one arm of the pincers closing to seize it.

After that marching, plodding along through the slush on the enemy's heels, sleeping when they could in villages from which the people had fled in terror of the Cossacks—thank God there are none of them here, the damned looters!—they gut any place they take in half an hour and fire what's left. No people anywhere, or horses and cows, but poultry and pigs—Russian sol-

diers ate meat like landlords. And once Ivan and two others found a store of wine—that was good—and everyone was cheerful. “We are winning,” they cried, “and soon the war will be over. Come on, boys, we are winning!”

Until one day in March, with spring in the air and the trees budding green, when out of the sky came shells shrieking, and they heard the drone of motors high above them and saw black crosses on the wings of the planes. German planes, German guns, swift and deadly, and an hour later gray-green columns of German infantry thrusting into the Russian lines.

Again it was the same old story, more guns, more planes, more rifles, better technique and mastery of war. At first they resisted stubbornly, but ammunition and food ran short and the wounded were left where they fell. Always the Germans cut in and worked round them until it meant retreat or surrender.

Back they trailed through the captured Austrian towns, those that were left of them—the enemy gave them no rest. Something was wrong, they said, back there in the rear, where they shirked the war, the slackers with pull—to let us do the dirty work—don’t they want to win, damn them? Oh, no, they want to get fat and have a good time in their nice clean uniforms, while we do the fighting.

And the news from the north was worse with each month of summer. Warsaw fell and the fortresses. Novogeorgievsk fought to the death, but Vilna and Kovno surrendered. And this was wrong and that;

whole regiments were slaughtered by an enemy they never saw.

Ivan's battalion melted like the rest and its discipline grew slack. The stern captain from the Caucasus was killed by a shell when the Germans first appeared; his dark older twin, the lieutenant, was missing with half the company after a futile counterattack near Lwów.

Ivan was lucky there, stunned just before the attack by a bullet that grooved his forehead, still sitting dazed by the roadside an hour later when the artillery rushed by in hot retreat. A horse fell right before him; there was a jam of yelling men and plunging beasts. And Ivan swung up on a caisson and sat there wiping the blood that ran into his eyes, not caring what happened.

A gunner took a clean new bandage and wrapped it round his head, with iodine that burnt like flame. Ivan was acting sergeant now and cursed the man as sergeants do for a cowardly pimp with his shining buttons and flawless boots and uniform free from blood or mud, and white bandages in his first-aid kit.

The gunner took it meekly—they'd only just come, he said, from Petersburg, three days ago. They had won a prize for shooting, he said more proudly, the best battery in the camp at Krasnoye Selo. But how could they shoot without shells? The guns were there and the caissons. They unlimbered them and placed them in position; it was all right, the shells were coming. They heard the battle draw near—in Christ's name, where were those shells? And then—whee-ee-ee-

boom—a German shell landed right on top of them, and another, and another.

“Knocked ten of us out, and two of our guns, and what could we do? We had no shells. I ask you, sergeant, what can a battery do without shells, I ask you?” His voice grew shrill.

So they had limbered up the guns that were left and—and—that was how it was.

“All right,” said Ivan, “make room for me there. I want to sleep.”

He rode with the gunners a day and a night and ate well, until they halted. And stayed with them there a full day more and slept and ate and told them about the war. Then the infantry came and he joined the wreck of his battalion and they entrained for the camp at Kharkov.

It was August now and the German pressure relaxed. There came big news from the rear. “The Czar, God bless him, Our Little Father Himself, has assumed command of His Armies, and sworn to win back each inch of Russian soil, God save the Czar!”

The cheering was not loud in the central square of Kharkov as the general read the Imperial ukase. “Oh, God,” they said, “each inch of Russian soil, but what about boots and food and guns? What about us,” they said, “a hundred left alive from a battalion of twelve hundred? To hell with Russian soil, and to hell with the war.”

But no one yet ventured to say, “To hell with the Czar.”



CHAPTER VI

THEY CAMPED not far from Kharkov, on the banks of a slow, deep river, and rested, watching recruits at drill. They had food in plenty now, and new boots and uniforms. It was fine to loaf and fish and swim in the cool water and lie naked in the hot sun, then climb aboard a lorry in the evening and ride to Kharkov with its girls and wineshops.

Kharkov's a swell town when you have money, any town's swell when you have money, but Kharkov was real swell, and eager for soldiers' money. Ivan had money, lots of money, more money than he ever saw in his life, a whole belt full of gold pieces. He'd earned it, hadn't he? He saw the Austrian first—if the fool had lain quiet none of them would have seen him, but he must needs try to wriggle deeper in the brushwood. So Ivan dropped back and let the others go on—there were only six of them, and there beside him was Misha, with one eye on him and the other on the bush where the Austrian was.

"I saw him first," said Ivan. "Get out of here."

"Halves," said Misha. He was a dull peasant from the north.

"He's mine, I tell you, halves nothing. I saw him first," but Misha butted him suddenly with his head and knocked him down, and jumped past him at the wounded Austrian with his bayonet, and Ivan heard the Austrian yell as he felt the steel. Misha had his foot on the man's back, tugging at the bayonet, but he turned as Ivan rushed him and tried again to butt. This time Ivan was ready and straightened him up with a short-arm jab, and gave him left in the belly and right to the jaw, and he went over backward and hit the back of his head on a tree root and lay still. The Austrian was quite dead; Misha's bayonet had found his heart. Ivan turned him over, but the rifle stopped him from lying flat on his back and threw up his middle so that the belt stood out beneath his shirt. A wide leather belt, with a silver buckle. Ivan slipped it off him. God, it was heavy, with buttons at the back. Gold pieces, round fat ones, scores of them, hundreds. What amazing luck!

Without a look at Misha, Ivan ran to join the others, buttoning his trousers as he ran, over the heavy belt, and someone laughed and said, "Hell, what's wrong with you? You did that only an hour ago," and Ivan laughed too, and swung the patrol through the woods to the left, a short cut it was, he told them. He never saw Misha again. So Ivan had money in Kharkov.

The second night in town a girl came sauntering through the big café near the station where he sat alone. A smooth girl with russet hair and the clear-cut

profile of dancers on golden cups that are found in ancient graves, pure Greek from the nose down, but the forehead above sloping back where the Greek is straight, and the cheekbones higher and wider, the old Scythian face still strong and permanent. Her eyes were translucent and hard as aquamarines, but there was something Eastern in their setting and in the faint blue shadow beneath them. Her mouth was curved and red.

She had walked through there like that two nights before and seen Ivan changing gold. This time she stopped at his table. "If you've got money," she said, "I'll take you to a better place than this—a fancy joint where officers go, a place with some class to it, not a pigsty like this."

Ivan stared at her. Her eyes had the shine of jewels and her body was slim and supple with small tight breasts under a thin frock. It was silk, tawny like her hair, and her stockings were silk. She looked like an officer's girl herself. He liked her looks.

"No good," he said. "They'd throw me out. Don't you know that yet?"

"Come first to my room. I've got some civilian clothes—you can change again in the morning. Have you fifty rubles?"

"Eighty," said Ivan, jingling the money in his pocket, glad he'd hidden the belt under the roots of a tree at the camp. He'd wanted a girl the time before, but the thought of the belt held him off, so today he'd hidden it.

"My name's Lia," she said, and kissed him with hot open mouth. "I like you. We'll have a party fit for a general, a party you'll remember always. Come quick; let's go."

She hurried him down the street and through an alley up the hill. He slid his arm around her and pressed her body against him, slim and supple, melting against him, burning him. They came to some steps. Halfway up he swung her round to him, eager.

"Wait," she gasped, "don't spoil it. Wait, I want you too. It's right at the top here." She took his hand and dragged him up the steps.

Her body was like honey in the lamplight, firm and muscular, clinging to him in passion.

"How white you are!" she murmured. "Your skin is white and smooth like cream, and how strong. No one has loved me like that before. You are wonderful, I thought I was dying."

There was no hardness now in her eyes; they were dreamy and soft. "I never knew it was like this," she told him. "When I saw you changing gold the other night, I thought of you like the others. I thought you looked clean and young, but I thought most of the gold. Not quite that, darling, I thought with him it may be fun as well as business, but I never thought— It began when you said they'd throw you out and I told you to come here and get clothes. I suddenly saw you here in my room, stripped naked, and felt all hot inside. That was why I kissed you. I never kiss men

in a place like that, but I couldn't wait. I had to kiss you."

She looked at him with soft beseeching eyes. "I love you, soldier," she said, "I love you, not your money. I won't take your money. If you want it I'll get you money. I'll get you anything you want. I thought men were all the same, some better some worse, yet all the same in the end. But you are different, and you don't talk rough like a soldier. Why are you so different from the rest?"

Ivan held her close. How honey-sweet she was, how soft and warm her flesh, he could feel her heart beating. It was grand to be here with this girl in a soft warm bed after the stink and blood of the trenches and the sweat of dusty roads. She was a grand girl, and he liked her, and no man minds being told he's different. And she looked like a million rubles. He'd bet there wasn't a girl in Kharkov to touch her.

"Come on," he said, "let's go to one of the places you spoke of, where the officers go—if you've got those civilian clothes for me."

"Why not stay here?" she whispered. "Stay here with me. I've got bread and meat and wine—why go out and waste money. Let's stay here close together. I want your body touching me like this. I love you. I want your body close to mine."

"Well, we can come back afterward, but it's early yet, I don't have to get back to camp tonight. You see, we're on leave really, but there aren't enough trains or

something, so they hold us here. And maybe some wouldn't come back if they let us go home. They have a roll call in the morning, but someone'll answer for me—they don't care. So jump up, sweetheart, and let's go. Who cares about the money?—there's more where this came from. I want a good time while I've got the chance."

"All right," she said, "if you want to."

She went to a cupboard and took out a new-pressed suit of brown serge that smelt of camphor, a soft white shirt of silk, a tie and collar, and brown silk socks and pointed shoes. "I hope they fit you."

She tied the tie for him, looking him straight in the eyes. Her eyes were hard and translucent like jewels. "You're a fool," she said, "and you don't know anything, but I don't care. You've done something to me, damn you, you crazy young fool, and I can't help it, but maybe God will punish you some day."

"God will punish you." Who said that before? His mind chased memory through his brain like a dog after a rabbit. Ah, yes, the same words, long ago—Nina Lvovna: "... the stupidest boy I ever met. God will punish you."

"What's the matter?" cried Lia. "Why do you look like that? I didn't mean it. Soldier, darling, don't go away and leave me."

"What do you mean?" he said slowly. "I'm not going."

"You *did* go, you went away and left me—I won't let you leave me." She hugged him round the neck and

kissed him wildly. "Are you clever after all, and know how to play with women?"

"Oh, shut up," said Ivan, "come on, let's go."

They called it Wiener Diele before the War, but now it was Café de Paris. Red plush and bright lights and mirrors, a jazz band, singing, and the smell of food. Uniforms everywhere, tables crowded with uniforms, officers eating, singing, flirting with girls. Tables all crowded, but Lia led straight to a corner. "Friends of mine there, they'll make room for us." Three young officers, drunk, springing up, shouting at Lia. An older man, sitting still on a sofa with his arm around a black-haired girl in a red frock, Lia speaking, "My friend Pavel Pavlovich, his father owns gold mines in Siberia, he's going to Petrograd to join his regiment. Maria Nicolaevna, Captain buzz, Lieutenants buzz, buzz, buzz."

Captain buzz? Captain Pigface—what was his name? Ivan didn't know his name, never knew his name, but Ivan knew *him*. And *he* knew Ivan. Ivan saw a gleam in his deep-set eyes, a gleam at him, knowing him, a gleam at Lia, greedy like a pig, saw his arm slip from round the girl, saw him rise.

"I am glad to meet you, sir," said the captain, smiling. "Perhaps the young lady and you will join our table?"

He pulled three chairs to the head of the table, and sat between them, Ivan on his left, and clapped his hands for the waiter. The drunken young officers fell

on the sofa round the girl, and all four of them began to sing.

"Champagne," said the captain when the waiter came, "champagne and zakouski, and pull this table back so I can talk with my friends. Those others yelp like puppies—and Maria Nicolaevna is drunk, too," he added to Lia. "Champagne," said the captain. "We soldiers don't get champagne in the trenches, my young friend from Siberia, but doubtless your father drinks it in his gold mine. Where is your father's gold mine?" He glanced at Ivan quickly, then looked long at Lia.

Ivan waited till his eyes came back. "Were you in the trenches, captain? Do tell me what—"

"Oh, don't talk about the war," Lia interrupted, watching them both. "Alexei Georgevich," she laid her hand on the captain's arm, "I heard you'd gone to Petersburg. When did you get back?"

"Only this morning. Wasn't it fortunate?—just in time to meet you and your friend from Siberia." He put his hand on hers; he had yellow hairs on the back of it like bristles on a pig's back.

The waiter brought the champagne in a silver pitcher full of ice and drew the cork with a pop and poured the foaming wine into tall narrow glasses. "I drink to gold mines in Siberia," said the captain, "and to you, Liushka." He drained his glass. "You are sweet, Liushka," he said. He took her hand in both of his. There was yellow hair like pig's bristles on the back of

both his hands, and he looked at Ivan with cunning pig's eyes.

Lia looked at Ivan, too, saw his fingers press hard on the tablecloth until the nails went white. Rough, untrimmed nails, broken and unpolished, the nails of a common soldier. She leaned her slim body against the captain's shoulder. There was a little smile on her lips, and her eyes were cold and hard.

Ivan stared at the two of them. Damn her and damn him. Had she known? No, of course not, but damn her soul!

"Won't you drink with us, Pavel Pavlovich?" she said softly. "Is it the custom in Siberia to refuse the toast of an officer of the Czar? The captain is an old friend of mine. It is for my sake that he wishes to honor you."

Damn her soul, how quick she was to jump, to catch on, to make her choice—quick like a cat.

Ivan took the glass and drank. "*Ich bitte Verzeihung*," he said slowly. "I am honored."

"Ah, you learnt German at the—in Siberia?" cried Pigface with raised eyebrows.

"There were German prisoners—where I came from," Ivan answered. The tightness round his head was passing; he could see them clearly now, the wine had cooled his blood. "I drink to brave men and fair women," he said and filled the glasses with steady hand. The captain sat up straighter and the little rolls of flesh round his eyes puckered with pleasure. This

was more fun than he had guessed, did the poor fool suppose for a moment . . . ? It would be fun to play him, foot by foot, like a fish on the hook.

Ivan watched him, mouse to cat, and gauged his thought. A game that two could play—and perhaps, if I play well. . . . “And gold where I come from,” he said loudly, “there is this and more, to pay for many toasts,” and he flung six gold pieces on the cloth. “Drink up, noble sir, and lovely lady, there is gold to waste—in Siberia.”

Ah, the burning power of gold! He saw it strike them, saw the sudden blaze of interest in the captain’s face, saw Lia’s flush.

“We drink,” said Pigface, and gulped the wine. “Let us drink and eat and be merry.” He would let out line for this golden fish, to prolong the sport.

The waiter brought *zakouski* in tens of little dishes, caviar, smoked fish and pickles, spiced meat and pungent cheesecakes, and vodka in a tall *carafe*, and more champagne to cool in silver ice bowls. Ivan ate and drank hungrily and talked with full mouth, wild talk of Siberian mines and the bitter cold and wolves with eyes like sparks in the forest darkness. Pigface gave him line, whispering and laughing with Lia as she leaned against his shoulder, enjoying his sport. Once the other girl rose from the sofa, hand outstretched to Ivan’s glass, and the captain stiffened. But one of the young officers caught her back and she fell into his arms with a shout of laughter.

A tall cavalryman from the next table sauntered past

them with an eager stare at Lia, and opened a window ten feet behind Pigface's back. "It is hot," he said, pausing beside the captain, staring down at Lia, "I hope you do not mind a little air."

"Thank you," said Pigface curtly, "we do not mind," and the other went slowly on. Ivan looked out and saw a garden with stunted bushes, currant and gooseberry.

"You seem hungry," said the captain. "Are you short, then, of food in Siberia?" He held Lia in his right arm, pressing her close against him. "They think a lot of food in Siberia, don't they, more than of gold or girls? Or is it just you who think most of food and drink?" His voice was rough and brutal. It was time to end this comedy and land his fish.

Ivan stammered. "F-f-food is always good," he said, "and d-d-drink," reaching for the golden neck of the bottle beside him.

"Eat and drink, but leave the girls for your betters," jeered Pigface, "and champagne too. Champagne is a drink for gentlemen, you—" He paused and met Ivan's stare with his pig eyes full of triumph.

"Then take your champagne," growled Ivan, and struck with the heavy bottle, quick and smash on the yellow hair above his ear, yellow wine and yellow hair and streaks of blood on his yellow face, and the captain lurched sideways holding Lia and fell with her on the floor.

For an instant time and sound were frozen as Ivan rushed for the window, dived and rolled over on the

soft earth like a shot rabbit, and was up and running fast between the bushes. A noise of shouting and one shot fired wide as he reached a wall and vaulted. Luck was with him—a narrow lane with a lamp two hundred yards to the right where it joined a street. At the corner he looked backward; there was no sign or sound of pursuit. He ran down the road, turned sharp at the next corner, dodging and doubling through narrow streets, but always downhill, till he came to a little square near the steps he had climbed with Lia, deserted and dark save for one tall lamp. He sat panting on a bench. He felt fine, the way he felt under fire, with little pricks of excitement and pride at the back of his neck and down his spine, and gorgeously alive.

Suddenly Ivan saw it all clear. He had been a fool, a double fool. Not for going with the girl, that was right and natural after the trenches; he'd wanted a girl terribly and been lucky to find one like Lia. But first to have gone out with her when she wanted him to stay in her room. She'd wanted him to stay, he knew that; she liked him and he liked her, and it would have been all right. That was his first mistake. The other was worse, to think that because she liked his body and said he was nicer than the others, even if it was true, and he believed it, it would make any difference to her, or change her. She was what she was, what life had made her, as Marx said. Nothing could change that, people couldn't be changed, they were what life made

them. He had been a fool, that was all. Not about Pigface, he was sure of that. Nothing had given him greater pleasure than crashing the bottle on his head; it probably had killed him, anyway he hoped so. That was what they deserved, the whole damned lot of them, officers and gendarmes and gentlemen and masters—kill the lot of them, and sweep away their bowing lackeys and fancy women like so much rubbish. Druzak had said that, Druzak was right, Druzak and Marx. Funny to think of them now, no, not funny, quite logical. The way he had acted tonight was the way his life made him act, the way he was. As Marx said, you were what life made you. There it was in a nutshell; now he knew.

He stood up from the bench and looked round him; there was no time to waste. Down the hill where the lights were—that was where he'd met Lia in the café. He swung to the left and trotted down a dark side street. Markov would still be there, if he wasn't too drunk. That was it, he could fix it with Markov. He came to the door of the café and looked through the glass. Yes, there he was in the corner singing. A boy caught his arm, ragged, begging, "Master, for pity, give bread." "Yes," said Ivan, "ten kopecks if you tell the red-faced corporal in the corner, see, the one who just stood up, with rifles on his collar, to come out here, someone wants to speak to him. Ten kopecks when you bring him out."

The boy slid through the door and Ivan watched

him. What was he saying? Nichevo, Markov was coming, here he was, swaying in the doorway. Ivan caught his arm and gave the child his silver.

"What in hell, let me go, damn you, who?—"

"Shut up, Alyosha, it's me, come on here, round the corner."

In the dark alley he explained quickly. "A girl gave me these clothes to go to a swell joint up on the hill for supper. And Pigface was there and knew me, so I hit him with a bottle—hope it killed the sookin sin—and bolted."

Markov shouted. He was drunk but only cheerful drunk, not soggy drunk. "You killed Pigface! Boy, you deserve a medal. Come on, let's drink to the Devil's pitchfork in the bastard's guts."

"Shut up. I've got to run, they're after me. Look, Alyosha, I want your boots and tunic—you can say you took them off because it was hot and lost them, if anyone asks, and here's five rubles, to drink the Devil's health when he skewers Pigface. Quick, I've got to run." He tore off his coat and shoes, and waved the bill in Markov's face. "Quick, there's no risk for you, even if they come here. You've been here all the time."

"Right," said Markov, and took the money. "Here's the tunic, you deserve it, here's one boot, and the other, you deserve them, too. I say you deserve a medal."

"Thanks," said Ivan, tucking the brown trousers into the high black boots. He threw the brown coat

ONE LIFE, ONE KOPECK

and shoes over a wall, and slipped his arms into the tunic and buttoned it up to his chin, and put the silk tie and collar in his pocket. "There," he said, "I can make camp now. They won't look for a soldier. They're chasing a civilian in a brown suit, and Pigface won't correct their error. Drink hearty, Alyosha. See you tomorrow, and thanks again."



CHAPTER VII

CAR NUMBER 1740-B was a bedlam of heat and stinks and men shouting, crowded like swarming bees, while the express train roared northward through the night. Little Ivan cared for that—he blessed the din and confusion which had helped to save his life, as he lay back tight against the wall in the upper bunk, with an arm round the drunken sailor whose huge body had masked him from last-minute detection. But the fellow was heavy to hold—one more lurch like the last and they'd both be on the floor. Ivan raised himself on his elbow and pulled the sailor back, then leaned over him and shouted down, "Have any of you got a belt to hold our brother here? They must feed them well in the fleet; he's too big for me to handle."

A shout of laughter and curses, "Throw him overboard. We're all soldiers here—to hell with the fleet!"

"As you please, but he weighs a ton and it's your heads he'll break when he falls, not mine. Do I get those belts?"

That convinced them, and in five minutes Ivan had the sailor lashed safe as if slung in a hammock, lying

there snoring and careless that Ivan used him for a mattress.

God, what a row they made, but Ivan could not have slept on a desert island. His brain was aflame with champagne and the glamour of the last five hours. Love and killing are stronger stimulants than any wine. Lia, the sly game with Pigface and its end, his flight and the change of clothing with Markov, the rush back to the camp in the darkness—lucky they'd given him a lift on that lorry, not even a question to answer at the gate—and the scramble down the riverbank to the tree where he'd hidden the money belt. Once he found that he felt better, and his luck had held right through.

He knew it was only luck, but that was what helped him and fired his brain. Anyone can make plans, but to win by sheer luck stirs a sense of triumph that you've conquered fate. What luck to meet that sergeant, crazy for women and drink, at the barracks! "Who wants a trip to Moscow?" he shouted, waving a paper. "Ten rubles a trip to Moscow. To hell with bloody Moscow! What I want's a woman and five quarts of vodka."

Swiftly Ivan grabbed him and pulled him to a corner. In that pandemonium no one saw them. "What do you say?" he whispered. "Why can't you get drink and women in Kharkov? There are plenty of both to find."

"I'm broke, God damn it, lost my kit, not even a rifle or knife to sell. Lost my crowd, don't know a soul

in the camp, and not a kopeck to my name, nothing but this bloody leave paper to go to bloody Moscow where there's not a soul I know, because my folks went back to Samara. Say, brother, have you got any money, just ten rubles? A smart boy like you could find girls for nothing in Moscow."

"Right," said Ivan, "and no questions. How long does your paper run?"

"A week, and it's thirty hours to Moscow. You'll have three full days there. Quick, where's the money?" He grabbed the greasy notes, and thrust the leave paper into Ivan's hand. "Watch me, I'm on my way."

"Can you get to town tonight?" asked Ivan.

"Of course. There's a mob going out for the Moscow train—they held us here because the papers weren't ready. Now I tell you, you go with them right up in front and show your paper. When I come later in the thick of the crowd, I'll yell for the captain—he knows me by sight because I tried to get my leave changed to Samara—and he'll pass me. That's a chance I'll take—for another five rubles."

"Paid outside the gate," said Ivan. "All right, let's go."

Discipline was breaking in the army of the Czar. As the men with leave permits pushed through the gates there was little scrutiny. "Hold up your papers," someone shouted. "Come on, now, those for Moscow first. Stand back, you others. The Moscow train leaves—the Kiev train leaves—now then, stop pushing, damn you, and show your papers."

The soldiers paid scant heed as they scuffled and struggled, shouting that they would miss their trains. Outside Ivan paid five rubles and set off trotting towards Kharkov. At the station it was simple enough. The railway police held steady, and men with leave tickets passed singly through a turnstile. But the weary captain in charge barely glanced at each paper as it came, stamped it, and said, "Hurry on, there are others waiting."

Yes, he had been lucky. That was his last thought as he slipped into dreamless sleep.

It was noon before the sailor sat up suddenly and Ivan's head fell with a bump on the wooden shelf. Instinctively he grabbed at the man's thick neck, then memory checked him, and he touched his shoulder.

"Feel better, brother? We had to lash you in last night; small room for big ones in these bunks."

The sailor turned, grinning. "Pretty shipshape job I call it, and you're not so little yourself. Say, do you want a drink?" He reached into the baggage space above the bunk and pulled out a gunny sack. "Here," he said, "bread and sausage and vodka. That's the stuff, good forty-two-spirit. They say you can't get it any more, but I got it." He drank and passed the bottle to Ivan.

The food tasted good as they leaned back swinging their legs. Opposite them were two peasants—an old man with a long sad face, a young one chubby and clean-shaven with bright eyes. "Have some," said the

sailor, tossing them a hunk of bread and sausage. "There's plenty more and I have tea and sugar, too. Say, kid, we're slowing down now. Take my teakettle and get some boiling water."

The young man jumped down and before the train had stopped they saw him running across the platform to the hot-water station. Soon he was back panting. "I got there first," he said. "Christ, I haven't tasted tea for months, and as for sugar—"

The sailor kept a tin mug for himself and Ivan, then poured the tea into a flat pannikin, and handed it to the old peasant with a lump of sugar. The man wedged the sugar between his yellow teeth, then tilted up the pannikin and sucked the tea in noisily. "God bless and save you, boy," he wheezed, and crossed himself as he handed back the pannikin, which the sailor promptly refilled. This time, as the old man drank, little rivulets of tears made streaks on his dusty cheeks.

When the sailor gave him the vodka he broke hoarsely into speech. "Oh God!" he cried. "Thou art God indeed, and I thank Thee. My faith had wavered but now it is restored. Thou hast given me a sign of human kindness, that I shall find my son alive." He crossed himself again, bowing forward so far that the sailor thrust out a hand and pushed him back. "Hey there, daddy," he said, "be careful. God would have let you fall on your nose if I hadn't interfered."

The younger peasant joined the conversation. "Poor old fool," he muttered, "he's lost four sons already in the war, and now they have told him the fifth is some-

where in a Moscow hospital—badly wounded, the paper said—but they didn't tell him where. It will need more than a miracle to find that one. Fine boys they were, I knew them all."

"Five fine strong boys," the old man echoed, "he knew them all. And the fifth, who knows? *Ak, Boje moi*, good Lord deliver us!" He sat swaying from side to side, with the tears flowing down his cheeks.

"And what about you?" asked Ivan. "How did you escape the war?"

The young peasant grinned slyly. "The first year I was too young, the second I was too nimble—I hid like a fox in the woods. And this year"—he paused for effect—"I'm too smart for them. I am a commissionist, not in my village, but in daddy's here. His were the first cows I bought when they put me on the commission. Three of his sons were dead already, so he didn't need the cows."

The old man nodded. "Three already, then the fourth, and now the fifth is lost."

"What commission?" said Ivan. "I don't understand."

"The food commission which the Zemstvo Union makes to buy food for the army. They gave me a paper saying I was a commissionist, and it's a good strong paper. If anyone asks me why I didn't go to the war, I say, 'The army is hungry and I get it food.' Then they stop and thank me. Is it true the army's hungry?" he added naively.

Ivan shrugged his shoulders. "It all depends on—"

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The sailor drowned his voice. "The army and the navy," he shouted, "thanks to those crooks and grafters in the rear, but we won't be hungry long. Just wait, I tell you. . . ."

"Shut up," hissed Ivan, pushing an elbow in his ribs, then went on quickly, "But why, my commissionist friend, are you going to Moscow?"

The bright eyes twinkled. "When I buy a cow or a pig, I pay such and such and drive it back to the collecting station and say I paid such and such more. Not much more, but a little on each pig and cow, and I have bought many cows and pigs for my commission. Many people say this is a bad war, but for me it is a good war. I make money and travel like a *barin* to Moscow. And I am not the only one."

Ivan went hot and he could feel the sailor's anger, but what was the use of getting angry? They were what they were: the old man sinking to the grave, spent and blinded by age and superstition; the young one eager to cheat his fellows, both so full of self and greed.

The train stopped again at a bigger station—half an hour's wait. They heard men shouting. "Come on," said Ivan to the sailor, "let's stretch our legs and get some air."

"Did you hear that?" the sailor exploded. "The little swine! That's the hell of it, not only the big parasites but the little ones, and the only difference between them is that there are thousands more of the

little ones. God, it makes me sick!" He spat on the platform.

"What do you expect?" said Ivan coolly. "They don't know any better, just follow the example set them."

"Well, they'll be set a different example before long. Say, friend, why did you stop me speaking back there?"

Ivan looked at him, six foot four at least, with a fine head but not much height of forehead above the eyes. Plenty of courage but little thought or caution, although the blue eyes were alert despite a drunken night. "Always better not to talk too much. You never know who's listening nowadays, so why take chances?"

"I'm not afraid of chances or anything. To hell with them all, I say, the officers and their spies together. Just wait, I tell you—" He flung into a tirade about navy life.

Ivan listened, thinking hard. Now he knew what Hilda had done for him in the Siberian forest: she had disciplined his mind and taught him to guard his tongue and brain against rash speech or act.

Suddenly the sailor checked his angry flow of words. "My name's Valerian Antonovich Glinko," he said abruptly. "What's yours?"

Ivan stared at him. "Er—er—er—I—" he stammered, taken utterly aback.

The other shouted laughter and brought down a great paw with a crash on Ivan's shoulder, swinging him round. "Bad papers, or I'm a Chinaman! Never

mind, boy, it's nothing to cry about," as Ivan flushed scarlet, "and you can trust me, anyway. I know a man when I see one."

For a moment their eyes locked and Ivan knew this, too, was a man he could trust. "My real name is Ivan Petrovich Petrov, but that's a long time back. In the army I had another, and now I have a third, on a leave paper I bought last night."

Glinko gripped his hand till the joints cracked. "And when you go back to the army?"

"I don't go back—that's over. It's a long story but—"

"And where did you leave your first name, your old name?"

"In Siberia—by order—after my escape."

"By whose order?"

"That I may not say, but I tell you this, it was not the order of the Czar."

"All right—comrade—I understand."

That night they talked long in the fetid air of the upper bunk. The sailor said he had been moved by "certain influences" to the Baltic Fleet. He would stay some days in Moscow on the way. "Where," he added significantly, "I shall meet friends. Perhaps you might meet them too."

"But, Valya," Ivan protested, "you don't know me. You have only my word to go on. How do you know that I?—"

"Don't be a fool. I saw your heart through your eyes on the platform there. If you'd been the wrong kind

I'd have thrown you under the train. Now tell me about Siberia, and your escape. They've never caught me yet, but the knowledge might be useful some day."

So Ivan told him part of it, about the commandant at Yavsina and his escape, and Hilda, and how at the end they met another comrade who had also escaped, but he did not give Druzak's name or describe him closely. He told, too, the story of Lia and Pigface and of the money belt he wore. Confidence for confidence. It was too late to hold back now, nor did he wish to.

"That's good," said Valya, "that makes it easier. Money always helps. Hell, I wish I'd seen you hit that bastard with the bottle! I have a score like that to pay myself. Now let's talk business; you say your leave paper's in order."

"Yes, it's good for a week—that's five days from tomorrow morning."

"Fine, that gives us time. I suggest you go to a small hotel in the old town and act natural. But don't get tight or take any more chances with pretty girls. You're sure you don't want to go back to the army, another front with different papers? It might be arranged, you know."

"Not now," said Ivan firmly. "I've done my job in the army. I've learned what they sent me to learn. What I want now is a worker's job, to get in touch with the workers. That's the base on which to build, that's where the thing must start. Marx said so, and that other one who escaped—you know, I told you, the one I met in Siberia—he said so, too."

"Hm, perhaps I could help you there. Do you mind wearing irons? You wore them in Siberia, didn't you?"

"Only on the journey, and I did mind it. But why, what do you mean?"

"I'll tell you. We have a friend there in Moscow, a doctor who handles muscle cases and spinal injuries that don't show on the surface, but need an iron brace—I guess he could fix you up. He can give a man a certificate saying that he's not fit for military service any more but can do civilian work, in a munitions plant, for instance—not heavy work perhaps, but on a lathe. You'd soon pick that up and you could take the irons off later, just wear them enough to justify the unfit-for-service certificate. How d'you like that?"

"Sounds exactly what I want," said Ivan, "and I'll say it's damn kind of you to—"

"I'm not being kind: I'm looking ahead. This game of ours is only just beginning, and when it starts men who have learnt war will be worth their weight in gold in the factories."

Ivan looked at him, startled. "Why, that's what he said in Siberia."

"Of course, it's obvious. You don't think the bosses will give up without a fight, do you? All right then, that's settled. Tomorrow when we reach Moscow you go to the Tartar Inn in the old city and act normal, as I said. By the way, what's that name of yours? Have you got a match?—I don't read very well, you tell me."

"Mordkin, Alexei Petrovich, sergeant."

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"All right, I'll remember, and don't you forget it again, Sergeant Mordkin. We'd better separate at the station because I'm too damn big. That's the curse of it—no one who's ever seen me can mistake me later, but I'll find something to do up there in the Baltic Fleet. I'll send you a message in a day or two. No matter what it says you follow it, it will be signed V—A, or if it's verbal the bearer will say, 'I come from V dash A.' All set? Fine. Good night, Comrade Ivan."

"Good night, Comrade V dash A," said Ivan laughing.



CHAPTER VIII

MOSCOW SURPRISED IVAN, not by its vast extent or by the beauty of the Kremlin, but by its cheerfulness and bustling prosperity. The great square outside the station was a market where every kind of food was sold fresh and cheap. True, the examination of his leave ticket had been casual, and there was little control in the big waiting rooms and central hall, where soldiers jostled women and even officers in an unruly mob. But the shops were well stocked and the people eager and busy in the crowded streets. Ivan saw no signs of privation and fewer beggars than in Kharkov. The square in the Kitaigorod outside the Tartar Inn was thronged with shouting men engaged in some form of business—he learned later that the stock-exchange building was too small for the horde of speculators.

At the inn itself, a low rambling house beside the old white wall, they refused point-blank to receive soldiers. When Ivan insisted, the clerk offered a corner of a room with three other men, and it was only when he showed two gold pieces and offered to pay in advance that they gave him an attic to himself for ten rubles a week.

The dining room of the inn was amazing. Valya had said it was an old-fashioned lodging for small salesmen and middlemen in the cattle or food business, or petty traders from the country. He thought that the constant change of clientele would help anyone with doubtful papers to confuse his tracks. Instead, Ivan saw an excited throng drinking foreign wine and talking in millions. From every table came scraps of conversation: "Fifty thousand sheep at ten rubles, that's what they cost me. I charge twenty, and pay half in getting the deal through—that's a quarter of a million profit."

"They wanted fifty freight cars to rush shells to the Front. I knew Lev Fomich had them. We fixed the deal—fifty rubles apiece per car for Lev and me—not a bad morning's work."

"You want fodder? How much, eight thousand tons? I can get it for you and only want five rubles a ton myself. You arrange delivery and take what profit you like."

"I saw X this morning in the Y department. He's dropped his price—all he wants is ten per cent commission now instead of twenty."

"The man to fix in that office is Z, but you must say it's a present for the Red Cross. He has principles against taking bribes."

This last in a loud tone from a red-faced man with a bush of red beard raised a shout of laughter all over the room. It was, Ivan thought, a regular thieves' kitchen or a cloud of carrion flies around a corpse.

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He spent the afternoon walking through the city and found everywhere the same rush of business, the same eagerness to grab, the same extravagance and indifference to the slaughter and disasters at the Front. Even in the workers' districts the flood of war-boom wealth had overflowed; wages had risen fourfold, and though prices had risen too, the stores were packed.

In the late evening as the sun was setting and the Kremlin towers and minarets gleamed like a fairy palace against the mauve-pink sky, Ivan stood before the tiny shrine of the Iberian Virgin at the entrance to the Red Square. Strains of sacred music came suddenly from the Theater Square on his left, and he saw a procession led by four priests in long white robes aglitter with gold and jewels, who carried a large square icon in a silver frame. There followed a line of choirboys, then a group of people, and in the center an elderly woman supported on both sides by footmen. After them a squad of soldiers, half a company at least, and in the rear a nondescript crowd of onlookers who walked slowly and reverently, crossing themselves at intervals and singing.

"What's that?" said Ivan to a man beside him.

The man removed his cap, bowed towards the shrine, and replied, "That is the Countess Zadorskaya, come to beg intercession for her son, a captain in the Guard Cavalry, whose squadron has been reported missing for seven weeks. Perhaps Our Lady will work a miracle and restore His Excellency the Count to his mother's arms."

"A miracle indeed," said Ivan bluntly. "I could tell her more of her son than the Virgin ever will. They charged a German machine-gun nest at Lwów, that outfit did—on horseback, the crazy fools. And of course they stayed there. The crows and the village dogs have all that's left of His Excellency the Count."

The man looked at him with horror and moved hastily on, crossing himself.

As the head of the procession reached the shrine it was greeted by a tall priest in black with a jeweled cross on his breast hanging from a golden chain. The four other priests bore forward their icon and bowed low before the shrine as if introducing it to the holy emblem within; then the old Countess, still supported by the footmen, tottered up the steps to the entrance and knelt heavily upon the threshold.

"That will cost her a pretty penny, and little good will it do except to those fat ravens," said a gruff voice in Ivan's ear. "They're getting fat on the war—make no mistake of that."

The speaker was a short thickset man in worker's clothes, with a seamed clean-shaven face and heavy spatulate fingers. He had not doffed his cap.

"Poor old gal," he added more kindly, "but maybe she wants to be fooled. Anyway, they're glad to fool her. Five thousand rubles this will cost, mark my word, and what on earth's the use of it?"

Ivan nodded. "Priests have to live," he said, "don't they?"

"I don't know why, and why should they live so

soft? Fat, greedy ravens, the whole lot of them." He drew closer and whispered, "I'm a poor man, brother, just a journeyman cobbler with one helper. But when our boy was killed my wife gave the priest a hundred rubles to say masses for his soul. What good did that do to him? But I couldn't stop it, and it made my wife feel happier. After all, women are like that, and there's no changing them. If I had my way I'd strip these fat ravens to their shirts and make them pray barefoot. That's what they're there for, isn't it?—to pray and serve God—but all they think of is money, money, money."

Ivan slept badly that night. He'd expected to find Moscow near despair—the rich and powerful trembling, the traders pale with fear, the masses hungry and snarling, ready to turn upon their masters. Instead, prosperity and plenty, shining faces and enthusiasm. This was no warworn city but the temple of a benevolent money god.

The din of revelers in the dining room kept him awake long after midnight. Once he thought of getting up and going out again—that girl in the café on the Ilinka who'd smiled at him, she was a nice one, perhaps she'd still be there. But the thought of his money held him back; he couldn't leave the belt here and he dared not take it with him. And he remembered Lia and the night in Kharkov; the moth had escaped the candle, but the flame had singed its wings.

Soon after dawn the bells began to peal, the famous bells of Moscow, with its forty times forty churches,

which had rung for centuries in token that this was Mother Moscow, the heart of Holy Russia. Ivan cursed them with every sulphurous curse the army had taught him, but the bells rang on indifferent, each minute more of them and louder. Suddenly he thought of Hilda and what she had said about foul-mouthed Russians and their filthy words. He sat up ashamed and went over to the washstand and rinsed his mouth. Hilda! Where was she now? he wondered. In Petersburg working, or perhaps in prison? Or—the thought burnt his heart—perhaps even here in Moscow. For a moment he saw her again as she stood beside him on the hillside when she kissed him on the lips and whispered, “Good-by, my little brother.” He went back to bed and fell asleep.

As he passed the desk on his way to breakfast, the porter hailed him, “Hey, Sergeant Mordkin, here’s a message for you. A boy brought it an hour ago, said it was urgent. He wanted to take it to your room, but I know two of that—none of these damn kids can go running about my corridors. In the old days it didn’t matter, but some of our gentry nowadays have money to lose and don’t always remember to lock their doors. Did you hear them last night?”

Ivan nodded as he opened the note. There was only one line: “Pushkin monument at noon. V—A.”

“What a row they made,” the porter went on, “and drunk—I’ve never seen the like of it, not in this place. If I helped one to bed I helped twenty. But I’ll say they’re generous. Who cares if they’re sick on your

boots when they give you twenty rubles, no less. Aye, these be hard days for some, but as far as I'm concerned the war can go on forever."

"The filthy slug," thought Ivan, but he gave the man a ruble just the same.

Pushkin's lean stone bulk looked down sardonically at the open space before the Passion Monastery, whose terracotta walls and golden crosses were bright in the midday sun. Behind the statue the Tverskaya Boulevard was choked with a Sunday throng of couples and families, the children scampering over the grass despite gendarmes and KEEP OFF THE GRASS notices. Was this too a sign that discipline was weaker, or merely proof of Moscow's high spirits? Along the Tverskaya between Pushkin and the monastery hurried automobiles, full of uniforms and summer frocks, and the three-horse carriages of the Moscow nobility, all on their way to one of the restaurants in Petrovsky Park for lunch before the races. More than ever it seemed to Ivan that Moscow made holiday, that there was nothing here from which the most fervent of Jeremiahs could prophesy a wrath to come.

As he lit a cigarette a tall thin man, who wore a black overcoat and hard hat despite the sun's warmth, stepped close and asked him for a light, whispering, "I come from V dash A. Follow me at a distance as if you were taking a stroll," then turned and walked slowly down the boulevard.

Ivan puffed his cigarette, bent and tickled the chin

of a plump baby in a perambulator, smiling at the pretty nursemaid, then moved through the crowd with his eyes on the black hat bobbing amongst brighter headgear some thirty yards ahead of him. At the Nikitsky Gate it crossed the square and turned left down a side street, to vanish suddenly in a narrow passage between two apartment houses. There Ivan found his guide awaiting him in a doorway.

"This way," he said. "We are meeting in the cellar because there is an exit on the other side."

They descended a stone stairway and the man rapped three times on a door, two short raps, then a third. It was opened by Valya, who put his arm on Ivan's shoulder. "Good," he said, "I'm glad to see you. And what do you think of Moscow?"

"Horrible. Why, they're glad there's a war, all of them. They think of nothing but money, and they're making it hand over fist. I think it's horrible. What chance?—"

"Well, we're glad too, so that makes it even, but we'll talk about that later. Come on in." He led Ivan into a square room, unfurnished save for some chairs and a table loaded with food and drink. "Now," he said, "I want you to meet our comrades. This one who brought you here is Sinkin. He works in the Archives Department of the City Council. This is Vasilieva, who is an overseer in the Marosov Textile Plant at Ivanovo." He pointed to a short plump woman with grayish hair and a rosy face, its amiable expression marred by a broad scar from the left eyelid across the

nose and down the right cheek—souvenir of a Cossack whip, Ivan learned later. "And this," Valya added more ceremoniously, "is Comrade Spartakov from the Petersburg Committee."

The others had merely nodded, but the man called Spartakov rose and shook Ivan strongly by the hand. "Welcome, Comrade Petrov," he said quietly. "I know of you from Druzak. We have watched you and you have done well, although not always wisely. But you have learned to fight, and to handle men?"

"A few men," said Ivan, "a score or two at most. I was never more than sergeant, although—"

The other nodded. "But you know drill and discipline and to stand steady under fire, and hold others steady with you? Five or fifty, it is all the same."

"Yes," said Ivan, "I think so."

Spartakov had sat down and Ivan stood before him like a schoolboy. This man he saw was gray—his hair, his short clipped beard, his cheeks, even his lips were gray, like dull leather. Yet in his gray eyes there was no dullness, but a cold light. He wore a gray flannel blouse buttoned up to the neck and gray trousers. His forehead was high and his face was drawn and lean.

For a moment they waited while Vasilieva served food and vodka, then sat down at the table. Ivan asked, "Is Druzak well?"

Again Spartakov nodded. "Yes, and sends you greetings." His voice was harsh but friendly.

"And Hilda Knutovna? Do you know anything of her?"

"Yes, she is back again in Petersburg. She was sent to Finland a year ago and they arrested her on suspicion, but found nothing and released her last month. She too is well; they did not treat her badly."

After that no one spoke for a time, not only because they were eating, but because everyone waited for Spartakov, and Spartakov was silent. Ivan was amused by the awe with which the big sailor watched him. Once more he felt a tinge of contempt for the Russian mentality which, however iconoclastic it claims to be, is ever seeking a fresh god to worship. Petersburg Committee or not, he was not afraid of the gray man, and he had gathered assurance from Druzak's word of greeting.

"Why is Moscow so cheerful?" he asked abruptly. "I've only been here twenty-four hours but I've walked all over the city, and even in the workers' sections there are cheerful faces and an air of well-being. Money flows like water, but there is food and goods for all. They like the war in Moscow. What does it mean, Comrade Spartakov?"

The gray man smiled harshly. "Grasshoppers dancing in the sunshine—the last sunshine they will know. You're right, of course, superficially, and I'm glad to hear you say it; we need men who can see for themselves and judge truly. Yes, this is the heyday of the speculators, and their fairy gold—or fairy paper—is flooding Moscow with prosperity even to the working quarters. But it cannot last. The Empire is rotten, rotten to the core," he banged his fist on the table.

"Never mind that," he added gruffly. "Tell me, Ivan Petrovich—you are a soldier—what of discipline at the Front, at Kharkov, on the railway, and here?"

Ivan told him what he had seen of the general slackening, of the rush through the gates at the Kharkov camp, and of the scuffling soldiers in the Moscow station.

Spartakov nodded. "That's it," he said. "That's what Druzak always said—the war will finish them. Easy money, boom days, inflation, all that behind the lines gives a spurious improvement, like strychnine to a dying man. But their army is breaking in their hands, and when the army breaks then we shall have men and guns to break the gendarmes. Now tell me, you"—his cold eyes blazed at Ivan—"what do you want now?"

"To work in a factory."

"Why?"

"Because Druzak said the workers were the base, that we can't succeed without them."

Spartakov rose and stretched himself, and spread his arms out wide. "Yes," he said, "the workers, with a police spy among every ten of them. Do you know that of fifty comrades who have worked in Moscow factories in the last six weeks thirty-two have been denounced to the police and shot or exiled?"

Ivan looked straight back at him. "Do you know that once I went into action with a company two hundred and fifty strong. Four German batteries caught us in a hollow with gas and high explosives. I was lucky—I had a mask, a good mask, a German mask

I had taken from a dead Austrian the week before. It was a fine place for gas, that hollow. Only seven of us came out of it alive, and one of them was frothing at the mouth, as good as dead already. Do you think I care for the risks of police spies?"

Spartakov nodded. "I've often wondered about war," he said reflectively. "I suppose it does toughen you—up to a point. Do you mean that you lost your sense of fear, or simply were never frightened?"

"I was dazed and startled at first, then it excited me and made me warm inside, like vodka. Afterwards I was indifferent—*nichevo*, what of it? Either they got you or they didn't, and there was nothing you could do about it, so why worry? One took all possible precautions and left the rest to chance."

"Ah, I like that—you took all possible precautions. Well, do the same in this factory and keep your mouth shut for the next three months. When winter pinches and the grasshoppers find their tails freezing, things may be different. But now, keep your mouth shut—and make friends. We don't even want reports from you. Just 'dig in,' as you soldiers say, and wait for the hour of combat. Have you made arrangements, Sinkin?"

The archivist nodded. "Yes, comrade, it's all settled. I'll take him tomorrow to Dr. Khalatov, who will fix him up with irons and the necessary papers. The job's at a munitions plant in the shell-turning shop." He turned to Ivan, "It's simple work, trimming the shell-casings on a lathe—you'll soon get the hang of it. You

must take this paper to the Savarov Hospital, fifth entrance, at ten o'clock tomorrow morning, and ask for Dr. Khalatov. It's all arranged; you'll have no trouble."

"Good," said Spartakov. "Now run along, young man, you'll hear from us later. And don't go fooling with strange girls or hitting officers with bottles," he added, with a smile at Valya.

Ivan stood his ground. "I want to send two messages," he said, "if you are going back to Petersburg. If not, perhaps Valya could take them."

"No writings," snapped the gray man.

"All right," said Ivan. He paused an instant. "First, to Hilda Knutovna. Tell her that the little brother has not forgotten and that he remembers best the last moment on the hillside. That's all. Then to Druzak—tell him I have obeyed his orders. That's all."

"Hm," said Spartakov, "you have a strange sense of Party values, young comrade—first to this girl and then to Druzak."

"Perhaps," said Ivan, "but Druzak will understand."



CHAPTER IX

DR. KHALATOV was a thick dark man with fuzzy black hair and beard and a Georgian accent. When Ivan came to his consulting room he looked up from some papers and snapped, "Good God, man, don't walk like that! I suppose that's the way you bounded up my stairs. Aren't you aware you've got a spinal injury?"

Ivan stared at him open-mouthed.

"Oh, I know," the doctor continued, "you're as healthy as a young colt. But don't forget I've got to sign a paper saying that the Citizen X, whatever your name will be, is suffering from an injury to the spine due to something or other—a shell or mine explosion would be the best. One of these days some damn spy will put two and two together and spoil the whole game."

"How do you do it?" asked Ivan.

The doctor chuckled. "Easy enough. You see this is a clinic for obscure muscular or nervous lesions. They come here from all over the Front and many of them die, and sometimes I hold out their papers. You, for instance"—he went back to his desk—"are Ivan Gregorovich Fodor—your name is Ivan, isn't it?—

private of the first class in the Fourteenth Siberian Rifles. He was blown up by a German mine in north-east Poland, lay stunned for a few minutes, then got up and walked off feeling dizzy, nothing more. Nothing happened for a week or two; then his legs suddenly gave way, and he fell in a heap. He could move his arms and the upper part of his body, but his legs were paralyzed. There wasn't a scratch on him from head to foot, not even bruise marks, but he couldn't walk. They sent him up here to me, on a stretcher, and at first I thought it was a case of shell shock—nervous paralysis, you know. The X-ray showed nothing wrong, but the paralysis moved upward, and Fodor was dead in three months."

As he talked he was taking measurements; then he stepped to the cupboard and brought out an iron contrivance. "Look," he said, "this pad fits into your spine at the back and you clip the padded iron round your waist like a belt, thus. Then these other two irons run down the outside of your leg and clip again to the ankle ring—see, like this. And there you are, complete. It will be a little uncomfortable at first, but you'll soon get used to it, and you'll note that the side irons stick out a bit at the hips so that no one can fail to see that you are wearing them. That's an important point. You'll have to walk stiffly because the knee joint on the iron has less play than the natural joint, but you'll soon get used to it. Now, walk and try it."

Ivan walked across the room and found that he couldn't bend his knees as usual, but the discomfort

was trifling. "Thanks, doctor," he said, "and—er—they told me that you would have information about my job."

"Oh, yes, I've got that here." He tugged at his beard and thought. "Yes, I think it's best to go straight ahead. You keep the irons on and wear these clothes." He went to another cupboard and produced a suit of workman's clothes. "Put these on and turn to the left down the corridor instead of the way you came in, and leave by the other entrance. Then go to this address—it's not far from the munition plant where you're going to work—and ask for Natalia Pavlova, Natasha they call her—you'll lodge with her. She's not one of us, but she's all right and will take care of you and arrange your police registration and everything. Here is Fodor's discharge from the army as unfit for further service—poor devil, that's true enough—and the certificate of employment at the factory as a semiskilled workman. Leave your uniform here, I'll dispose of that. And by the way, where have you been staying?"

"At the Tartar Inn," said Ivan. "I paid a week in advance, so they won't worry. And I left nothing there behind me."

"Good. Then that's all settled."

"Tell me, comrade," said Ivan curiously as he buckled on his money belt, pulled up the coarse woolen trousers, and sat down with difficulty owing to the stiffness of the irons to pull on his socks and boots, "are there many of us, of our comrades, in Moscow?"

"More than you'd think, but the organization is faulty, and these damned spies are everywhere. We have members all over the country, but they pinched our leaders in the past few years and broke up most of the centers. Half of the best ones are abroad and a lot more in jail or Siberia. Our job now is to organize and prepare our machine. Personally, I hope the smash doesn't come too soon; we need a six-month interval after it begins to crack. But we won't get it." He shook his head. "No, everything will go on just the same until one fine day it smashes bang, like that"—he clapped his hands together—"and then we won't be ready. I saw what happened ten years ago. If we had had a proper organization we might have turned the trick then, but it came too suddenly—and we failed."

Number 7 Okhotny Pereulok, Hunter's Alley, was one of a row of tenements built just before the war on Western lines with steam heat and running water on every floor. It was planned to give each worker a room with gas and cooker. Then the plant employed five hundred workers; now the number was four thousand under pressure of war orders, but no new tenements had been built, and although the heat still functioned fitfully, the water pipes had burst and the gas had been turned off by order of the superintendent after the third explosion in eighteen months. Before that twenty-three workers had been asphyxiated.

Natalia Pavlova was a big buxom woman in her early thirties with thick plaits of brown hair wound

round her head, and a deep voice like a man's. She greeted Ivan warmly and led him into a room five yards by four whose atmosphere made him gasp; its one small window was tightly closed. There were two rows of plank beds. "This will be yours, and it costs one ruble a day," she said, pointing to the right-hand corner. "You are lucky to be on day shift, I suppose that's because you are an injured soldier. And luckier still that Tolya, who sleeps there in the daytime—he's on the night shift—is clean and healthy, not like some of these swine who think my room is their own pigsty."

As his eyes grew used to the dim light Ivan saw that all the beds were occupied. "They sleep in the daytime?" he said.

"Of course. This is the night shift. When do you think they sleep? They work from seven p.m. to seven a.m., and your crowd, the day shift, from seven a.m. to seven p.m. But there's half an hour off to eat in the middle of each shift since the strike last spring. And they give you food there, not too bad either, at fifty kopecks a meal. Or you can take in your own food if you want to. Have you got any bedding? No? Well, you can share with Tolya, or buy some of your own if you've got the money. Have you the papers for the police?"

"Yes," said Ivan, and handed them over.

"Good. Now you'd better go and check in at the shop—there are no Sundays at this plant, you know—so as to start work tomorrow morning. Vasha will take you over. Where's that damned brat?" She yelled down

the staircase, and a towheaded, dirty-faced child came running.

"Hey, Vasha, take the man over to shell-turning shop number sixty-three. You see the foreman there, young man, and a dirty drunkard he is, but a driver, so don't try loafing. Then you'd better come back here and talk to Tolya; he wakes up at five. He's in the same shop and will tell you what to do. I suppose this kind of work is new to you."

"Yes," said Ivan, "but a man has to live. They promised me a pension, but God knows when I'll get it."

"Well, the wages here ain't bad. Piecework, of course, paid by the number of shells you turn, but when you get the hang of it you ought to make thirty rubles a week, and that's good wages, I'll say, even with prices the way they are. Why, my old man's been a skilled steel hand for fifteen years and thought he was lucky to make sixty rubles a month. He went to the war, the damned fool, when he might have stayed here on exemption and drawn real money. Two hundred a month he'd have made, or more. Instead he gets captured right away in East Prussia, and now he's working on a farm somewhere. Well, he's alive, and that's more than some can say. And by the way, if you want anything to eat in the morning, I'll give you tea and bread and cheese or a piece of herring for twenty kopecks a day. I know it's a lot of money, but everything's so dear nowadays, and women have to live as well as men."

ONE LIFE, ONE KOPECK

The small Vasha had been staring at Ivan with round-eyed interest. "Why do your bones stick out?" he asked eagerly as they walked across the courtyard.

"They're not bones, they're irons," said Ivan.

The child seemed puzzled. "Do you have iron bones?" he said.

"No, I got hurt in the war, and my legs are weak so I wear the irons to help me walk."

"And you can't run like me?"

"No, I told you my legs are weak."

"Then if I threw a stone at you and ran away, you couldn't catch me?"

"I mightn't catch you, but I'd pick up the stone and throw it back, and I can hit a rabbit at fifty yards. We learnt that in the war, you know," said Ivan, smiling.

Ivan told the foreman, "In my squad at the Front we had a custom that every new recruit bought a drink for the sergeant. I don't know whether that's done here, but I touched some of the money for my injury, so if you'd take these three rubles I'd feel good about it, as if I was back in the army again."

"You'll find this better than the army, my boy," said the foreman, taking the bills, "but that's a fine custom. I think we'll adopt it. This is your lathe, number eight. Sasha here is moving up a notch tomorrow. He's one of the best men we've got, and makes good wages, don't you, Sasha? You watch how he does it."

The automaton at the bench looked up, although his hands never ceased their rapid movement. "Yes,"

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he said, "forty-three rubles last week, and they say I can get fifty or more in the shop upstairs. You see, brother," he turned to Ivan, "it's like this." He slowed the movement. "You pull this lever—that chips off the roughness—then this one, gradually—that moves her forward bit by bit until she's smooth from head to tail; then you pull this one and she falls out, see, into the conveyer. The new case comes in with this foot pedal, see, from above. I tell you, boy, this is a beautiful piece of machinery," as the rough shining shell case dropped into the groove and Sasha resumed his swift motions. "Just as simple as that," said the foreman, "but you've got to time both hands accurately—the grooving and the movement. All right, then, you punch the clock before seven and the whistle blows at seven sharp—ten kopecks fine for every five minutes late, and if you're late more than an hour in any week you're fired. Otherwise it's a good shop, and the wages the best in town. Ain't I right, Sasha?"

The automaton nodded, too busy to say more.

The lathe taught Ivan the dumb obstinacy of things, which was good for him to know. If he had been a machine gunner in the war, he'd have learned it sooner, but the line troops never thought of it. When the machine guns jammed, as they often did, they cursed the sons of bitches for not supporting the infantry, and left it at that. Now Ivan found that machines have a life and character of their own; they must be humored and treated right, neither too much nor too little, but

exactly right. Then they respond to their master's hand like a thoroughbred horse. He botched scores of shells while learning, and once in rage swung the lever so hard that the machine jammed and the power was cut along the line. That cost him drinks for the whole shop, and he bought them and looked pleasant, for, as Spartakov had said, he was there to make friends. Finally he mastered his machine, learned the touch and feel of it, and it obeyed him: his wages one week beat Sasha's record—that was three months later—with a total of forty-five rubles.

They were a friendly crowd, the workers in the munition plant. And why not? They were making more money than they'd ever dreamt of, food and lodging were cheap, and the war was far away. Yet they grumbled always. Their worst grievance was the way they were housed and sharing beds with the other shift.

"What are you kicking about?" Ivan asked them. "In the trenches we never had a bed at all, lucky to get a night's sleep on the bare ground. No one shoots at you here or drops bombs on your heads, and you get paid for it and eat well every day. If you'd had two years of the Front like me, you wouldn't talk this way."

One day a man named Iliador took Ivan aside and said: "Listen, there's a little group of us who are interested in your stories of the Front and would like to hear you talk. We feel that most of the men here don't

realize how hard things are up there. They've got selfish here in Moscow. Won't you come and tell us about the war?"

He was a slim, pleasant-faced young fellow, rather better dressed than most and a quick, neat worker who kept his average near forty rubles a week.

"All right," said Ivan, "why not?"

There were six men in the back room of the restaurant to which Iliador invited him: Tolya, his bedfellow; the automaton whose lathe he had taken—his name was Sasha Gorky, and he boasted that now his wage was sixty-five rubles a week; a sturdy dwarfish man with a shock of red hair named Klishko; two others, and three girls, one of them a pretty kittenish blonde named Varvara, who sat on Ivan's right and, before they'd had three drinks of vodka, was snuggling up against his thigh with the complaint that the point of his iron brace kept them too far apart.

Iliador made the conversation general, but talked at Ivan.

"Yes, we're lucky here in Moscow, but we don't realize it, as Ivan said. Isn't that so, Ivan Gregorovich? Our life here is hard sometimes, but it's heaven compared to the Front—that was hell on earth, wasn't it?"

Ivan had said so a dozen times, but as he opened his mouth to reply he caught a glance from the little red-headed man facing him—surely there was warning in the light blue eyes under the heavy brows.

"Well," he said, "it wasn't always hell, you know. I mean conditions were difficult, but we had good times,

too. During rest periods in the villages we were comfortable enough, and then of course there was the spirit of the army which held us together and kept us going. Loyalty to the Czar, God bless him, and the thought that we were fighting for our country. What are hardships in comparison with that?"

Was he mistaken, or was there approval in the blue eyes across the table?

"Yes," persisted Iliador, "but life was terrible, wasn't it, up there at the Front? And I've heard there was a shortage of shells and rifles, that the wounded weren't cared for, the food was bad, and there was frightful slaughter to no purpose."

"We had losses, of course, and when the enemy was advancing it wasn't always easy to run the hospital and supply services. But that's a soldier's life. There must be to and fro in every war, and there were times when we chased the enemy, too." He launched off into a story about the advance of the year before which carried the Russians to the Carpathian foothills.

"I thought you were on the Northern Front," said Iliador.

Now how did he know that, Ivan wondered, but he answered quickly, "That was where I was injured, but last year I was down in the south." This time there was no mistake: the little man across the table beamed approval.

After that the party went on for an hour or two, but Iliador was strangely silent. Varvara was more kittenish than ever, but Ivan used his iron to keep her at a

distance. As they were going home the little man joined him and said, "Shall we walk together? It is hard for me to go fast because my legs are short, and yours, I know, are stiff."

They walked for a time without speaking. Then Klishko said, "I'm glad you stood off that damned provocateur—that's all he is, did you know it?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that he's a dirty police spy, the *sookin sin*. If anyone grumbles about conditions in the factory, he leads them on and gets them into trouble. You'd talked just the opposite, that the Front was tough and the factory a bed of roses, so he tried to catch you about the Front, hoping you'd say something disloyal. Then he'd report you. You see, rats like that get paid by the head—so many rubles for everyone they denounce."

His voice was so bitter that Ivan risked a question. "Why do you care?" he asked.

"Because they got my brother that way—not this Iliador, but another bastard like him—and sent him to Siberia. He grumbled about the fine system when they dock your pay for this and that, ten kopecks for every five minutes late and fifty kopecks for breakages and all that stuff. What did it cost you," he asked curiously, "when you jammed your machine and checked the power along the line?"

"Ten rubles, fine," laughed Ivan, "but it cost me fifteen more to buy drinks for the gang in the shop because I stopped their work for half an hour."

Klishko lowered his voice, "Once I tried to persuade the boys to strike against the fining system. My brother talked like that, too, only louder, that's how the police spy got him. But do you think they'd hear of it? With the wages now paid in Moscow you couldn't raise a strike in any factory."

"So," said Ivan. "Well, I've no cause to grumble, and if the rest are satisfied, it's all right with me."

"It's not all right with me," cried Klishko violently. "I don't like their dirty tricks of fines and spies and provocation. The workers won't strike now because they're greedy, but one of these days someone will think of telling them they are fools to let the bosses get the profits. Why not take it for themselves—why not take the factory and run it for themselves? Believe me, they'd listen to that one if they'd listen to nothing else."

"Do you think so?" said Ivan noncommittally. "Well, here we are, number seven. Good night, and I hope we meet again."



CHAPTER X

IN NOVEMBER, as Spartakov had predicted, the shoe began to pinch. Ivan's shop still worked two shifts, and the piecework rate held steady, but they were idle on Saturdays and Sundays, and a promised new order for shells seemed hanging fire. Prices, too, had doubled, and the workers were less cheerful.

Ivan was quick to observe the change. People seemed more conscious that the war was being lost, and although the boom continued there were doubts and fears on the stock exchange and in the restaurants where speculators met.

One Saturday night on the Ilinka Ivan remembered the pretty girl he had seen in a café there the day he came to Moscow. For four months he had lived in Natasha's dingy lodging, and she was almost the only woman he had spoken to. He found the café where he saw the girl—there was a gilded stag's head over the entrance—and sat down in the corner and ordered supper. The girl was nowhere to be seen. Ivan finished his meal and read a Petersburg paper, heavily censored; one full column on the front page had been blacked

out, and there were blank spaces where news items had been suppressed at the last minute.

Suddenly he saw the girl standing in the doorway, looking about her as if in search of someone. As she stepped forward Ivan waved to her, and she walked over to his table.

"Hello," she said coolly, "not seen you for a long time. And what's happened to your uniform?"

"Sit down," said Ivan, making room on the bench. "Would you like some supper?"

"Yes," she said, "but where have you been? Why did you never come here again?"

"I was in hospital. My back was hurt by an explosion and my legs went bad on me. They made me wear these—look," he put her hand on the iron at his hip. "Then I was discharged unfit for service and got a job in a factory near the Donskoi Monastery."

The girl looked at him. She was tall with red hair and hazel brown-flecked eyes. Her smile was gay and friendly. "I don't believe a word of it," she said, "not if you wore three sets of irons. The thing that struck me that evening was the way you walked, like one of the big cats. I know what I'm saying—I was raised in a circus—and I know how the cats walk, panthers and tigers. No man with an injured back could walk like that."

"Never mind," said Ivan, "I like you. What's your name?"

"Nadya. And what's yours, your real name, I mean?"

Ivan blinked at her. "Don't be too smart," he said. "I was christened Ivan—that's my name. And what have you been doing all this time?"

"Oh, I had a friend, a foreigner who was over here selling motorcycles to the Zemstvo Union. He called himself a Dane but I know that he really was a German and—"

"How did you know?"

"Never you mind, I did know. But he did good business and was very kind to me, got me an apartment, paid up till next June, and left me some money and clothes and everything. So now I'm free." She smiled, "I like you too."

Ivan took her hands in his and kissed them gently. It was good to meet a girl again, so clean and merry and perfumed, and her spirit pleased him. "That's nice," he said, and let his lips rest softly in the hollow of her throat. For a moment she was motionless, but he felt her breast rise quickly under his cheek. Then she caught him tight round the neck and pulled his mouth to hers.

"Darling," she whispered, "I was so lonely. You will come with me?"

He nodded without speaking.

After that they met every Friday and spent the week end together. She made him buy a good suit of clothes and showed him the lighter side of Moscow where she'd lived since the circus collapsed in the troubles after the Japanese War. It was not love be-

tween them, but good comradeship, and their blood was young and hot.

One night in December they were in the dining room of the Bazaar Restaurant on the Ilinka, which was headquarters of the big speculators. A group of Siberian gold men, rough fellows with spreading beards, had just come in from the east and were scattering money. "Champagne for everyone," their leader shouted to the head waiter. "There is gold in Siberia, and we are the boys who get it."

Nevertheless there was an air of constraint. One still heard talk of war contracts and easy money, but many of the guests were anxious and subdued. The Siberians called for gypsies to dance and sing, and a brightly-colored throng of men and women with dark features, slender hands and feet, and graceful gestures, filed in amidst roars of applause, and formed a semicircle near the Siberians' table. Their *chef d'orchestre* stepped forward thrumming the strings of his guitar, but before he could play a note a man rushed into the room, whitefaced and breathless. "He's dead," he gasped, "they've killed him—they've killed Rasputin." He plunged to the nearest table, seized a bottle of champagne, and drank it in great gulps.

Instantly the place was in uproar, with one name, Rasputin, as *Leitmotiv*. The newcomer, who still wore his coat and round fur cap, raised a hand for silence. "It's official," he said. "He was shot by Prince Yussupov, and the deputy Purishkevich and the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich were implicated in the killing.

Yussupov shot him in his palace in Petersburg. They say that he and the Grand Duke have fled or been arrested, and that martial law has been declared."

What a buzz of talk in the great room that had been so dull, what excitement, what flame of life, thus kindled in them by death! Rasputin murdered, Rasputin the all-powerful, Rasputin whose shadow was greater than the glory of the Czar! The shadow had dimmed that glory, but to these traffickers in their country's travail, these parasites on Russia's body, the death of the archparasite Rasputin was a portent which drove them to frenzy. Forgotten the gypsies, who waited forlorn, then slipped away unnoticed. Ignored the Siberians with their noisy shouts for music and for wine. It was strange to see how this dire news and the common excitement brought different groups together. Men and women who had never met argued passionately about Rasputin's life and death and what might follow. Ivan and Nadya were caught in speech with a woman and two men at the next table—typical profiteers with vulpine faces, the woman agile with jewels on ears and bosom and arms. She was a stout blonde in the late forties, with heavy raddled cheeks that sank down to dewlaps like a bulldog's, and ill-dyed yellow hair. But tonight she was inspired by the tragic import of Rasputin's murder, by alcohol—and by fear.

"I saw him once," she said. "He preached in a private chapel here in Moscow. Not tall, but he looked like a giant in the pulpit, and his eyes—how can I

describe them—they were not like the eyes of a man at all, but burning like an animal's in the dark. His voice was low but very strong. He spoke slowly, and each word seemed to mean everything, yet afterwards I could not remember what he said."

She paused and drank half a tumbler of brandy, then continued: "But that is nothing. Do you know why the Empress loved him—I don't mean loved him like a woman, but adored him as Saint of God? Twice already, they said, he had saved the life of her little son when the doctors had given him up, but the third time was the strangest. The Czarevitch was at headquarters with his father, and he had an abscess under his arm, which grew worse and worse, with high fever. Unless it was lanced he would die, but if they lanced it he would bleed to death—you know he has that bleeding disease—so there was no choice. It was a matter of hours at most; the child was doomed. The Empress received a message at Tsarskoe Selo. She was frantic; there was no hope. She could not even see her son before he died and hold him in her arms to ease his passing. She was frantic. My sister, who is a maid in the Imperial service, told me that she sat there moaning, and refused to move. Then Rasputin came and laid his hand upon her head. She had sent for him hours before, but he had been off on some wild party. The Empress sprang up and threw herself at his knees. 'Oh, father, save him—you must save him, you must, you must.' My sister was standing in the corner near the door; she had been told to bring some

soup to the Empress in the hope that she might eat. She did not dare to move. She said that Rasputin's eyes blazed then as I saw them here in Moscow, and he grew bigger as she watched him. 'It's a hard thing you ask, my daughter,' he said in his deep, slow voice, 'but I will try.'

"He went out to a little private chapel where he spent all night upon his knees before the altar. In the morning, so they say, he came back to the Empress, spent and shaken. His face was white as wax and his hair and beard, even his long black robe, were dank with sweat. He staggered as he walked, but his eyes were coals of fire. He went in to the Empress and told her, 'My daughter, your son will live. All night I have wrestled with God like Jacob with the angel. God wanted to kill your son—He was set on it—but I fought Him off. This must not be, I told Him; this child's life must not be taken. God fought me back with thunder and lightning and His words of power, but I persisted—and prevailed—the child will live. God gave me back his life, but I had to pay for it with my own. Henceforth your son's life is tied to mine. While I live he is safe; God has given me His promise.' An hour later a telegram came from headquarters saying that contrary to all medical experience the abscess had suddenly subsided, the fever had disappeared, and the Czarevitch was out of danger. That was Rasputin and that is a true story—and now Rasputin is dead."

There was fire in Ivan's veins as he rode home with Nadya through the icy streets. As the sleigh skipped

and skidded round the corners her body was warm in his arms. When they reached her apartment he caught her by the hands and swung her round his head like a dancer in the ballet.

"Be careful, Ivan, you'll hurt your back."

"To hell with my back," he shouted, "and to hell with these bloody irons!" He tore off his clothes, unlocked the metal clasps, and flung the irons in a corner, then seized Nadya again and danced her wildly across the room. "You were right the first time," he said. "Of course, there was nothing wrong with me. But there were reasons. I got into trouble with an officer in Kharkov and had to quit the army." His brain was singing, but he kept a guard upon his tongue.

"I knew it, but you fooled me. You always walked so stiffly, even without the irons. And yet"—she held his hand to her heart—"you didn't make love like a cripple."

Ivan laughed aloud. "Walking stiffly was a habit, but making love was your fault, you little devil. But tell me"—he grew serious—"you know this speculator crowd in Moscow. What will they do, now that Rasputin's dead?"

Nadya frowned, then looked up at him. "Tonight marks their finish," she said simply. "Couldn't you feel the despair in all their talk? Didn't you see how haggard their eyes were whenever there was a pause in the excitement? What do you think, Ivan? And why do you think it? And why were you listening so attentively to those people at the table beyond us who were talk-

ing German? I heard them. I don't understand German, but I know it when I hear it. Oh, Ivan, why don't you answer? Surely you know you can trust me. And I could help you if you wanted. Whatever you are or whatever you are doing, I don't care. I want to help you. I want to do something with my life. Ivan, won't you tell me?"

Ivan looked at her and his eyes were hard, but she met them, unflinching. His thought flashed back to the platform of an unknown station between Moscow and Kharkov when Valya had looked at him like that. What had Valya said: "I could see your heart through your eyes, and if you'd been the wrong kind I'd have thrown you under the train." Valya was right. He could see this girl's heart through her eyes.

"Not now, Nadyusha," he said gently, "but perhaps later. I do trust you but there is time ahead of us. Don't pick your cherries before they're ripe, as the peasants say."

Two days after Rasputin's death the workers in Ivan's factory were informed that they would only be needed four days a week instead of five and that piece-work wages would be cut fifteen per cent. This roused them in good earnest, and the shop buzzed like an angry hive.

Ivan said little, although he felt an unexpected solidarity with these men at whose grievances he had laughed before. The wage cut affected him little because he still had more than a thousand rubles in gold

and had been making good money in the last two months, but the others were sore and angry.

The night after the cut was announced the whole shift waited, a hundred and fifty of them, in the long narrow vestibule where they hung their coats. The foreman had gone home, and the second shift was already on the job. It was not a regular meeting, but the men seemed to feel the common need of talking things over. Ivan felt it too and began now to understand what Druzak—and Marx—had meant by saying that the workers' movement must be the base for action.

As they waited, uncertain, a small mild man with a stubby beard, whom Ivan had known as the butt of jokes because his wife gave birth to triplets a year before, jumped up on a chair and began to talk. "Listen, fellows," he said, "we've got to think what to do about this. Some of you have families"—there was a shout of laughter and cries of "Three at once" and "Why be in such a hurry?" The speaker laughed with them. "All right," he said, "but you have families, too, maybe not so quick as mine, but they have to eat just the same, don't they? Now what are we going to do about it? Since July prices have doubled and tripled, but they didn't raise our wages. And now we get this cut."

"Strike," yelled someone in the background. "Refuse to work unless they raise our wages instead of cutting them."

"Don't talk nonsense," cried Klishko from Ivan's side. "Don't you know, don't we all know, that the big

order they were expecting is hung up? If we strike they'll throw us into the street and close the shop until an order comes along."

There was a confusion of voices and shouting from all over the room.

"Wait a minute," said the speaker on the chair, "I have something to suggest. Suppose we tell them we'll take regular wages instead of piecework and work shorter hours on the shift. What's the average in this shop? Say thirty-five rubles a week. Let's demand thirty for an eight-hour shift."

"But if they refuse?" shouted Klishko.

"Well, dammit, we must do something, and perhaps they won't refuse."

"To hell with that—let's strike," shouted the same man as before. Ivan recognized the voice now, a man named Grubenko, as stubborn as his native Ukraine.

They all began to shout at once, strike or no strike, piecework or regular wages, eight-hour shift or twelve-hour. Ivan watched them coolly, gauging this one and that, who was sincere and who was tricky, who meant business and who was talking hot air.

Gradually they drifted away and Ivan walked down the line to where his sheepskin coat was hanging. Klishko trotted beside him, talking volubly. "They don't get the point," he said, "all this nonsense about strikes and hours and wages and piecework. Who made this factory anyway? We did, the workers. It should belong to us. Until these dumbbells understand that, there won't be any solution of the problem."

"Is that what you think?" said Iliador suddenly appearing beside him. "I'm interested to hear it." His face was flushed, and there was the reek of vodka on his breath.

Klishko bristled. "Who cares for your interest, you sookin sin, I've had enough of you."

"Have you?" said Iliador, and knocked the little man sprawling with a flush hit on the nose, and ran forward to hit him again when he got up.

"Wait a minute," said Ivan, checking Iliador with his shoulder. "You can't hit a friend of mine like that."

"Shut up, you goddamn cripple. If you weren't a cripple I'd hit you too. This is no concern of yours."

"Oh, isn't it?" said Ivan. "And suppose I say you're wrong, you dirty police-spy bastard."

Iliador gave him one look, then jumped back like a boxer on his toes. "Aha, cripple," he said, "you've thrown your irons away, have you? God damn your soul, I always thought you were a faker. All right, I'll show you now."

He had backed into the corner where there was a heavy spanner to turn the water cock. He grabbed it and rushed at Ivan, swinging the murderous steel.

Ivan side-stepped and hit him on the back of the neck as he rushed past, with the full weight of his body. Iliador catapulted facefirst into a radiator, and lay still.

"Now what shall we do about that?" said Klishko in a matter-of-fact voice, wiping his bloody nose on his

sleeve. "I'll say this, friend Ivan, you don't talk often but when you do talk you say a lot. What shall we do with this police spy?"

Ivan picked up the spanner. "Here's what I'll do with him," he said, and raised his arm.

Klishko caught him quickly. "Don't be a fool. There's a better trick than that—the belting outside the door."

"What do you mean?" said Ivan.

"What I say. Pick this bastard up and put him in the belting, where it passes through the wall. That will break him to bits, and who'll know the difference?—he's not the first one. Only a month ago a friend of mine slipped in a patch of oil and got caught like that. His own wife didn't recognize what was left of him when at last they cut the power. What about it?"

"Fine," said Ivan, "much better than the spanner."

He threw the tool into the corner and hoisted the unconscious man across his shoulder, then plunged through the wooden door. A quick look: there was no one there, nothing save the broad leather belt that carried the power to the lathe shop.

"Put him here," said Klishko, "like that, headfirst. The belt will do the rest. That's it. You must have hit him hard—he doesn't even yell."

"No," said Ivan. "but it's crunching him, the sookin sin. Let's go and have a drink."



CHAPTER XI

FROM THAT DAY barriers were down between Ivan and Klishko: there is no stronger bond between men than to share the killing of an enemy.

One night after work the little man said to Ivan, "I want to talk to you, but where I live it's impossible; there are always people about. Won't you come for a walk with me?"

It was Friday and Ivan had arranged to meet Nadya, but she was going to the ballet and would not be at the Stag's Head until midnight. He suggested they go there for supper.

Klishko sat facing Ivan with his elbows on the table. "I'm going to speak freely," he said. "To begin with, I'm an anarchist, but I am not attached to any party—there is no real anarchist party in Russia." He drank a glass of vodka and munched a sandwich of bread and pickled herring. "Now it looks to me as if something is bound to break. I can't help feeling that Rasputin's murder was a signal and that events will soon move with increasing speed. Do you agree with me?" Ivan nodded. "Look at this business about Iliador. I have reason to know he was a police spy and you seem to

have known it, too. But there's been no fuss or inquiry. I mean it's true, as I said at the time, that other people have been caught in that belt and killed, but you'd think they'd have made more of an inquiry. I tell you they're scared; they know themselves it's breaking up."

"Whom do you mean by *they*?" said Ivan.

"I mean the Imperialist regime and the functionaries, officials, and gendarmes who hold it up. The whole machine is being shaken to pieces and I believe they know it."

"Yes," said Ivan, "and then what?"

"That's what I'm coming to. I mean we've got to organize. You can't do anything without organization. Look at all that talk the other night about a strike, or demanding shorter hours and the abolition of piece-work. It came to nothing. The fellow with the triplets had some ideas, but he didn't know what they were or what to do about them. We must have an organization." He hesitated, staring at Ivan, then burst out, "Anarchism is no good. It may be all right some day but it's no good now. It's not practical and I want something practical. Can you help me? You don't have to answer if you don't want to—I shan't be offended—but I ask you a straight question, can you and will you help me?"

Ivan weighed it in his mind. To his surprise Rasputin's murder had brought him no fresh instructions from Petersburg, and more than once he'd been tempted to begin action without them.

"Yes," he said at length, "I can and will. I propose

that you and I start now to form a Bolshevik cell in our shop."

Klishko's head jerked backward. "Good God," he said, "you're one of them, are you? You've kept it mighty dark."

"I had orders," said Ivan softly, "and let me tell you, Comrade Klishko, if you're going to play with us it's good-bye to your anarchist independence. To Bolshevik discipline there are no exceptions."

His voice was calm, but he was blazing with excitement. His first convert is strong wine to the devotee of any cause.

"That's all right," said Klishko, and took Ivan's hand across the table. "You can count on me utterly."

For hours they talked of ways and means, first about the hundred and fifty men in their own shift, discussing them one by one; then about the night shift, how they should be approached.

"I'll speak to Tolya," said Ivan, "the man who shares my bed. He's with the night lot, and I know he hates the gendarmes because when his young brother in the village hid away from military service, they caught and shot him. He's a steady quiet fellow, Tolya, but I noticed the other night that he spat on the floor when some drunken fool in our room was playing 'God Save the Czar' on an accordion."

They were so deep in talk and plans that Ivan looked up in amazement when Nadya joined them. "What happened?" he said. "Did you leave before the end of the show?"

Nadya laughed. "I'm half an hour late; it's twelve-thirty."

"Why, I thought it was hardly eleven. You see we've been talking. I want you to meet my friend Klishko—Nadyezda Ivanovna."

"Were you talking important business?" said Nadya, sitting down beside Ivan. "You must have been, and perhaps I interrupt you. I'll go if you like and meet you later."

Her voice was light but her eyes wooed Ivan and besought his confidence. He made a sudden decision and turned to Klishko. "I'd trust this girl with my life," he said, "but your life is yours. What do you say?"

Klishko did not falter. "You're the boss," he said. "I told you I'd obey orders. You can tell her what you please."

"All right," said Ivan, "then I'll tell you, my dear. We have been talking conspiracy, how to organize the workers for what is coming. What that will be we don't yet know, but we are sure that it is coming and is not far distant."

Nadya flushed. "Thank you, Ivan," she said gently, "and you too, my new friend. Perhaps somehow later you will let me help, if there is anything I can do. Now let's have supper; I'm hungry as a wolf, and I'll tell you about the ballet."

Just after New Year the factory received another order for shell cases, not so large as had been hoped

but enough to put them back on a five-day week and to revoke the wage cut for piecework. This quieted some of the grumbling but the workers were still dissatisfied because food prices now rose, it seemed, from day to day, and the foreman told Ivan privately that the order only meant work for a month at the outside. "It came just in time," he added significantly. "If they hadn't got it we'd all have been out in the street within a week."

And there was not much gaiety in the Christmas and New Year holidays that year. True, the news from the Front was neither good nor bad—the Germans were still feeling the effects of the terrific struggle on the Somme at the end of the previous summer—but Moscow had become a prey to the direst rumors. Some said that the Empress—hardly anyone spoke of the Czar any more—had determined to make peace, which of course would have been fatal to what was left of the war boom; others said that the murder of Rasputin had plunged her into stupor and that Russia was drifting like a ship without a rudder. Instead of merriment and boisterous talk, deep drinking and hearty feasts, people met in corners, each one looking over his shoulder suspiciously, and talked in whispers. The newspapers were more censored than ever, and Ivan noted that the guards around the Kremlin and other official buildings were thrice as numerous as before.

Meanwhile he and Klishko went ahead with their Bolshevik cell. They found that sixty per cent of the

workers in the shop were indifferent, neither knowing nor caring about politics or the war, save when it touched their friends and relatives. What concerned them was their wages and the price of food. From many of them, he saw, all other interests had been drained by twelve hours' work each day. Like the Sasha at Ivan's lathe, they had reached a robot stage from which nothing short of an earthquake could release them. Perhaps, Ivan thought, the earthquake might come, but meanwhile there was nothing to be done with them. Of those who did take an interest in politics the majority were Mensheviks who had a measure of class consciousness, wanted freedom and were even socialistic and talked of the millennium when workers should own the means of production. But they seemed to hope, these Mensheviks, that their happy future could be attained gradually, by compromise, without a fight. The Social Revolutionaries were tougher metal, younger men from villages, ready for any violence, but their chief aim was land for the peasants, and the workers' control of industry stirred them little.

Nevertheless, working slowly and cautiously, Ivan and Klishko began to form their cell. Here they convinced a Menshevik that the possessing class would never abandon its spoils without a struggle; there they persuaded a S.R. that despite his peasant origin he had now become a worker and his lot was bound up with the fate of industry. As Ivan had hoped, his bedfellow, Tolya, was an eager recruit. He had read Marx and Engels, and once certain things were explained to him

—which reminded Ivan of his own talk with Druzak in the Siberian forest—he jumped at the chance of tackling his fellow workers on the night shift.

By the middle of January they had pledged fifteen men upon whom they could depend, out of a total of three hundred in the two shifts. Klishko was especially insistent upon this. “We don’t want numbers,” he kept saying, “that will come later—what we want now is men we know about, who can stand up and take it and will fight when the time comes. I mean our job now, Ivan, is intensive work—to build our organization for the future.”

Then, as they were about to hold the first meeting of the new cell, Ivan received a message from Petersburg. It came through Sinkin, the archivist, and read, “Pushkin statue noon Saturday. V–A.”

He showed it to Klishko, from whom he no longer had secrets. “I wonder if Valya will come himself. It must be breaking down faster than we thought if he can risk meeting me like this; he’s as big as a house and, as he himself said, no one that’s ever seen him can possibly forget him. But this is good news, unless they blame me for going ahead as we have done, without orders.”

“One thing I don’t understand,” said Klishko. “Why did the Bolshevik organization in Moscow never get in touch with you?”

“That’s puzzled me, too, but I suppose the idea was that I had no special job to do here, nothing but to work in the factory and make friends, as Spartakov

said. Perhaps they thought it dangerous. Anyway, Valya will tell me when he comes."

The next day was a work day but Ivan hadn't missed an hour or been late in his four months of employment, so the foreman gave ready assent when he asked time off to go to the hospital. "My back is better," he said. "As you may have noticed, I don't have to wear the leg irons any more, but the doctor wants to see me and make a final examination."

How different the Pushkin monument from that earlier rendezvous with Sinkin! Then warm sun and the crowded boulevard, the Tverskaya a river of automobiles and carriages hurrying to the races. Now zero-cold and a flurry of snowflakes in the wind. Ivan stamped up and down, chilled despite his sheepskin coat, peering through the blizzard for the sailor's tall figure. The bells of the Passion Monastery clanged noon, and he stepped forward to look down the Tverskaya and stood waiting with his back to the statue.

Suddenly an arm was thrust through his, and a voice behind him said, "Hello, Vanusha, but I can't call you little brother any more, you've grown so big." He turned—and there was Hilda. She threw her arms around his neck and kissed him on the mouth. "Oh, Ivan darling, I've missed you terribly. I thought I couldn't bear it those first months in Petersburg. If only they'd let you write to me, but there wasn't a word, and I never knew whether you were alive or dead."

He held her off at arm's length. How fresh and lovely she was with her hair like a wide gold halo beneath the cap of snowflecked squirrel! "You are dressed like a countess," he said. "I never thought the Party—"

"How clever of you to guess it. Comrade Ivan, I have the honor to present the Baroness Vera Mikhailovna Osten-Zachen, daughter of one of the oldest families in Courland—that's what my passport says. And staying at the Metropole, no less, in a suite, Comrade Metalworker. You see," she added more seriously, "the Petersburg Committee want to know some of the high-up stuff here, and they thought I might get it for them."

"Isn't it a terrible risk?" he asked.

"Oh, not so much. The Osten-Zachens have innumerable branches and literally scores of children. Don't forget I was born in Riga—in fact one of the Osten-Zachen girls was my greatest friend at school. I think I can fool anyone in Moscow if they ask questions. What sort of suit have you got under that sheepskin?"

"Quite nice," said Ivan. "It won't disgrace you in the Metropole. Did Valya tell you about the money belt I got off the Austrian prisoner? And besides, they pay us good wages in my shell factory."

"Splendid," she beamed, "then the Baroness invites you to lunch. Oh, Vanusha darling"—she caught his arm and hugged it—"you can't think how happy I am to see you again. I've missed you so much, my little brother that is grown so big."

"Me, too," said Ivan with his arm around her.

Words were too slow for them as, in a corner far from the music that re-echoed, shattering, from the curved glass roof, they talked of Ivan's life at the Front and Hilda's work in the Party, her imprisonment in Finland and return to new and greater activity.

"Rasputin's death has made an enormous difference," she said. "The Empress, of course, wants peace, but the British and French won't have it. I think the British killed Rasputin, really; they knew he was swinging towards peace. And now if the Empress tries it, the Czar himself will fall—yet it's her only chance, we know that. If the Czar goes everything will crumble; they may think they can hold it but they'll be wrong. Do you remember what Druzak said, what the war would do for us? He was right, and the day is not far distant. He is wonderful, Ivan, and he sends you the warmest greetings. By the way, that officer you hit in the Kharkov café is dead; his skull was fractured."

"That's good news," said Ivan, "but tell me, Hilda, why have I had no instructions since Rasputin died? And why has no one put me in touch with the Moscow Committee?"

Hilda studied him. "You just hear that you've killed a man and you care no more than that?"

"That rat? Of course not. And there was another more recently." He told her about Iliador.

"That means nothing to you," she asked, "a man's life?"

"No," he said, "why should it? I've killed Germans and Austrians and seen my comrades slaughtered like cattle. Those were real men, brave men, but who

cared? Life is just a hazard anyway—that's the lesson of the Front. Never mind that—what's the answer to my questions?"

"Quite simple. We were too busy to send you word, and Druzak said that if he gauged you rightly you'd go ahead yourself without instructions."

Ivan sighed relief. "That's good news," he said, "because Druzak was right. I have gone ahead. We have a cell of fifteen members in my shop, I think we can trust them all. And we are holding our first meeting tonight at seven-thirty," he added proudly. "How does one do it, Hilda?—I mean the proceedings. You must tell me what to do. But first explain why there's been no contact with the comrades in Moscow."

"We thought it was safer, and don't forget you weren't doing any Party work before. There was always the risk that they might trace you on that Kharkov business, and the Moscow group is overworked already; in short, there was nothing to be gained by your meeting them. Now, of course, that you've started this cell it's different, and I'll speak to them tonight. What's the time now, five-thirty? I must go in half an hour, but we could meet later if you like, say about eleven here for supper."

"Yes," Ivan whispered, "and afterwards may I stay here with you, all night?"

She looked at him and her eyes were tender. "Of course, Vanusha darling," she murmured smiling, "you incestuous little brother. Didn't you know that, any time, always?"

"I'd hoped so," said Ivan, "but I'm glad to be sure."



CHAPTER XII

HILDA WAS a dim wraith behind the frost-covered window as the Petersburg train moved slowly forward and Ivan waved a last good-by. "Man's heart is a dark forest," says the Russian proverb, and Ivan was lost amongst the trees of his own feelings to wander in the darkness of his own desires. He loved Hilda and she loved him—that he knew beyond any doubt—but there had been something missing. He sought for it in the forest, could see it just ahead of him like a will-o'-the-wisp, but he could not grasp it. He had wanted Hilda exceedingly and they had loved with passionate delight, but all the time he had felt in the back of his mind that he was losing more than he gained, that they both were losing. Was it, he wondered, her laughing word "incestuous" that caused this strange remorse, or perhaps that their companionship in Siberia had been so fine and equal, so complete and free of sex that somehow it seemed to be tarnished by the intimacy of love? Hilda had given herself without stint or question, but it seemed to him as he pursued the elusive vision of his thought that she had done it more for his sake than her own, that he was still her "little

brother" to be kissed and petted, to have anything that was hers. In a word, that she had slept with him because he wanted it, not because she wanted it, which, obscurely, hurt his pride and shocked his strong young manhood.

As he crossed the crowded square outside the station and swung himself aboard a streetcar, his mind formed a sudden picture of Nadya waiting for him in the Stag's Head tomorrow night. He did not think of her deliberately, but her image came before him like a picture on a screen, smiling and friendly, and it made him glad.

It was after midnight when he reached the suburb where he worked, but he went directly to the wooden house where Klishko lived in a tiny closet by himself. The little man was asleep, but jumped up when Ivan knocked.

"Well," he cried, "has she fixed it?"

Ivan nodded. "Yes," he said, "you and I and Tolya are to meet them tomorrow, and one of the Moscow Committee will be there—Rubinin his name is. You know, I've been a little nervous about this business, I mean about our going ahead without instructions, but Hilda cleared the whole thing up and she says the Moscow people are pleased that we made a start."

"It worried me, too," said Klishko, "and I'm glad to hear it's settled. You say I'm obsessed by organization, but it does matter tremendously, and I hated the idea that we were a lone-wolf unit floating in the air like a balloon."

They talked for hours; then Ivan rushed off to catch Tolya and tell him about the rendezvous at eight that night.

"Do you mean Aaron Moiseyevich, the Yid dealer in carpets?" said the frowsy porter when they asked for Rubinin in a small hotel near the Kursk Station. "He's in sixty-three, at the end of the corridor on the second floor."

Rubinin was alone in the room, a small portly man of middle age, clean-shaven with beefy face and fleshy nose. "Sit here," he said, throwing a pile of carpets from the sofa to the floor. "This is my stock in trade, and what is more I do good business. I sell carpets, you understand, and make a profit." His beady eyes glinted at Ivan. "You are punctual, comrade," he said; "that is rare in Russia. Did they teach you that in the army? Now wait, I will fetch our comrades—I expect they are playing chess in the room across the corridor."

The newcomers were Popov, a big fellow whose thick beard and hearty swagger reminded Ivan of the Siberian gold miners in the Bazaar Restaurant the night of Rasputin's death, and a girl with wispy yellow hair and skin so pale that her face looked green under the electric light.

"Now," said Rubinin briskly, rubbing his hands, "it seems, young comrade, that you have already formed a cell in your shop."

Ivan nodded. "We have formed one," he corrected. "It was really his idea," he waved towards Klishko.

"You see, Comrade Rubinin, I considered myself under Druzak's orders, but he sent me no word and—"

"Yes, yes, that's all right; Hilda Knutovna explained it. Of course, we knew about you, but the Petersburg Committee thought it was safer for us to leave you alone; didn't you kill an officer in Kharkov or something? Yes—well never mind that, the point now is what are you to do. I have here a chart which will give you an idea of the Party organization in Moscow. Look at it carefully, all three of you, because of course you can't take it away. The green circles are the district sections and the red dots the different cells. How many members have you—fifteen? That's good to start with, if you can trust them. All right, then I put you here." He made a dot on the chart with a red chalk pencil. "You're in my section, near the Donskoi Monastery. I'm glad you've got started because you see how weak we are down there—only eight dots, eight cells in all my circle, while some of the others have twenty-five or more. Maria Lvovna here," he put his hand on the girl's shoulder, "is our liaison officer. She works for the Red Cross and visits the factories asking for contributions to the wounded soldiers' fund. In other words, to steal more money from the workers for a lot of crooks and grafters. God damn their souls"—his voice went harsh with sudden venom. "But you don't have to give her more than ten kopecks when she comes."

He turned suddenly to Klishko. "You were an anarchist, weren't you? Can you obey orders?"

"Ask Ivan," said the little man. "He's my boss."

"Good enough. And you"—he spoke to Tolya—"I don't need to ask more about you, you're the sort we want—you'll do your stuff without doubt or query."

Tolya flushed with pleasure, and the Jew turned to Ivan. "You," he said, "are different. Unless I'm wrong you're more of an orderer than an obeyer. Druzak has vouched for you and says you will go far, and I'll take his word always. But you are young and headstrong. Tell me, Comrade Ivan"—he bent forward with outstretched hand and his eyes were serious and steady—"can I count on you to obey my instructions absolutely, even when you think they're wrong? You see, we must have discipline—it's our greatest problem. I'll give you all the freedom possible but when I issue orders you *must* obey them. What about it?"

"Of course," said Ivan simply. "I learned that in the army."

Rubinin smacked his hand upon his knee. "Druzak said so," he cried. "Ach, what a man! He said you'd think for yourself and act when necessary if you were left alone, but you'd obey orders when you got them. All right, so now I tell you. For the time being you mark time. Get new recruits if you can, but carefully. Better one man you trust than twenty who waver when the pinch comes. Press strongly the idea that the workers should be masters of the wealth they have created by their sweat and toil. Lose no chance of exploiting any grievance that may arise in your shop—injustice by a foreman or anything that annoys the workers. Emphasize the hardship caused by rising

prices while wages remain at the same level. This is all spadework, but don't neglect it. Meanwhile the pot is beginning to boil; we have news from Petersburg—I expect Hilda Knutovna told you—that the Empress is in despair. On one hand she knows peace is her sole hope; on the other there's the pressure of the French and British to go on fighting. In that dilemma the Czar's power will crack like a nut between pincers; it cannot be avoided—it's only a matter of time. When that comes we can start action; now we must wait and dig foundations."

After leaving the hotel they passed through the Kursk Station because Klishko wanted to know when the Rostov train would arrive next day. Ivan saw immediately that the crowd of soldiers in the central hall had an uglier temper than before.

"Look where you're going, you civilian bastard," growled a big rifleman as Tolya, pushed from behind, blundered heavily against him. "Take that, damn you," and he swung his rifle butt at Tolya's head.

Ivan caught his arm and deflected the clubbed rifle upwards, then hit the man hard under the jaw; he fell sprawling on the floor. "Come on," he said to Klishko, "let's get out of this. Where's the inquiry office? These fellows are nasty."

At last they reached the Rostov platform. Here a train was waiting but no soldiers were allowed to take it. The approach to the platform was blocked by a mass of leave-expired men in their long gray coats demanding to ride on the train. As Klishko tried to push

through to the platform commandant, the mob surged forward suddenly with a common purpose. This was a train to Kharkov and Rostov, and they were going to Kharkov and Rostov, and no one should stop them. They brushed aside the platform commandant and his four military policemen and ran for the train. The officer barked an order and to Ivan's amazement the four policemen drew revolvers and began firing at the backs of the soldiers. As men fell headlong, the crowd halted and swung round in fury. Ivan saw one man, half-kneeling, methodical as at practice, aim his rifle point-blank at the commandant. He fired and the officer fell backwards with a bullet in the brain. They took the policemen and beat them to the ground in a whirl of fists and weapons, then flowed on to the train, leaving them dead and broken. It all happened in one minute, incredibly quick and brutal. Soldiers clambered into the cars and the platform was empty, save for a dozen corpses.

"Come on," said Ivan to Klishko, "let's get out of here. Never mind when your friend arrives tomorrow. He knows where you live, doesn't he? Then let him find you. This is no place for us."

As they rattled home across the Moscow River in the crowded streetcar, Tolya, that silent soul, made one of his rare remarks. "I think," he said slowly, "that our Comrade Rubinin was right; the time for action is near. I mean," he corrected, "it looks, one might say, as if the situation was getting out of hand."

They laughed excitedly, with glowing hearts; yes,

surely, their day was coming. "That scene," said Klishko sententiously, "marks the end of an epoch. The apple is not yet ripe; it's still green and bitter on the tongue, but wait a month or two and things will happen."

Nadya looked at Ivan quizzically as he hurried into the café. "No apologies needed," she said gaily, "you're only ten minutes late. Who've you been fighting this time?"

Ivan stared at her. "It's all right," she said, "I'm no wizard, but when my best young man rushes in in such a hurry, with his knuckles skinned and bleeding, I am entitled to suppose that he may have been in a fight somewhere."

Ivan looked at his hand. "You've a bright girl," he said. "Some fool of a soldier swung his rifle at Tolya and I had to hit him. But that was nothing. Listen, Nadya, I agree with Klishko: things are beginning to move in this country, and move fast"; he told her what had happened on the Rostov platform.

She listened in silence and her face was grave. "I don't like it," she muttered; "it makes me cold down the back. There are too many dark people in this Russia of ours—the wild and savage ones who know no reason save their masters' whips. Who will hold them when the whips are broken? I'm frightened, Ivan, of what is coming." She caught his hand and held it to her breast.

"Don't be silly," he said. "What is coming is our opportunity. Of course, for the time there may be chaos and wildness, but we shall urge the dogs against

their masters and aid them to break the whips. Then when that is done we shall make men of these dogs and set them upright on their feet with their faces to the sky instead of running belly-to-ground as they do today. Of course there will be wildness and chaos, I know that, but we'll drive through it and use it, as I said."

"Don't talk so loud," she said coolly. "And by the way, Ivan, did your girl friend get away all right?"

Ivan gazed at her open-mouthed, and despite himself a flush crept upwards to his hair. Damn these women, anyway, always jumping like fleas from this to that. "What do you mean? What girl friend? What do you mean?"

She wagged her finger at him like a schoolteacher. "Don't be naughty, Ivan darling. You know what I mean quite well. If you'll tell me on your word of honor that you haven't met a girl, whom you like a lot, in the last forty-eight hours, I'll get out and stand on my head in the middle of the room in front of those two fat men at the table near the pillar—and think what a scandal that would cause."

"You win," said Ivan, "but how in hell did you know?"

There was more than laughter in her eyes as she smiled back at him. "You baby," she said fondly, "women always know. But she didn't get you, did she, not all of you? There's a little piece of Ivan somewhere down in the depths of his heart which belongs to Nadya, and no one else can take it. They may have

the rest of you but you must never let anyone take that little piece. That's mine."

"And what about your heart?" asked Ivan.

"Don't talk nonsense," she said sharply. "Why don't you call for the waiter? You come here late and ask silly questions and all I want is supper."

Three days later there was a lockout at one of the larger munition plants in the Donskoi suburb. It had no red dot on Rubinin's chart, but the workers had been clamoring for higher wages to meet the greater cost of living. The owners wanted to reorganize their shops for a different type of production, and they met the demand for higher pay with a twenty per-cent cut all round, and when the workers refused to accept it, locked their gates and began the alterations. They would save two weeks' pay for five thousand men, then they would reopen and the new order was so good that they could afford to raise wages if need be.

Klishko saw what happened. It was a Sunday, so he was at leisure, but this other factory had been working the full seven days and most of the workers did not even know there was a lockout. By nine o'clock in the morning three or four thousand men were assembled in an open space outside the iron gates across which ran a streamer, black letters upon white: **FACTORY CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

"They had no leader," he told Ivan, "and for an hour or more just milled around, no one knowing what to do. Then someone shouted, 'Let's rush the

gates. If they won't let us work, we'll smash their damn machines. To hell with them!

"The crowd surged forward. I was right at the back, just watching—it was none of my affair. On the left of the gate was a small tower about forty feet high with a platform—maybe for a fire watchman, I don't know. A man stood up there with a megaphone. 'Go back home,' he shouted, 'there is no work here. If you won't accept the wages we give you, you can go home. You don't have to work here; we can get others, so go back home.' That made them angry and they yelled back at him and drove solid at the gates.

"Do you know what that fellow did then?" said Klishko impressively. "He let loose with a machine gun. Started right away without a word, not into the crowd, that's true, but above their heads. Bang-bang-bang-clatter-clatter-clatter, like the Devil hitting a giant anvil in hell. And did they run? Within one minute there wasn't a man in sight; they ran like rabbits."

"Was anyone killed?" said Ivan.

"Not that I could see. He fired above their heads, I told you, and there was nothing on the other side save an open field. But suppose they hadn't run—what would he have done then? Do you think he would have dared to lower the sights and let them have it?"

"Depends how much guts he had. A brave man can do a lot with a machine gun. We'd better look out for that, Klishko, when the time comes. Christ!" he added reflectively, "they must be getting scared if they're mounting machine guns in the factories."



CHAPTER XIII

IN MID-FEBRUARY Ivan's factory got a new order and wages were raised, which stilled grumbling for a time. But the newspapers were more harshly censored than ever and Moscow hummed with rumors. It was known that troops had refused to return to the Front and had not been punished; the barracks were overcrowded; there were thousands of deserters in the city, and the streets were full of disorderly soldiers. One day near the end of the month there were no newspapers at all and the rumors ran riot—there was martial law in Petersburg—there was civil war and fighting—the Czar had been assassinated—the Czar had fled—the Czar was marching on the capital with fifty thousand men—each story wilder than the last.

For two days Moscow was chaos. Workers streamed out of their factories and marched in the streets with the soldiers, shouting for peace and bread. There were no organized demonstrations and little attempt to repress the mob. The authorities seemed afraid to act, and the Trade Union and Menshevik organizations were awaiting news from Petersburg. Rubinin had no information—the trains were not running and the tele-

graph was blocked. Popular excitement grew, and vast crowds surged round the Duma building in the center of the city. On the night of the twenty-seventh the prisons were opened, and their inmates, common criminals and politicals alike, released wholesale and carried in triumph. The next day the newspapers—still without news from Petersburg—announced that a soviet of workers and soldiers had been formed in the Duma building and called for the election of delegates from factories and regiments. The majority of the soviet committee were Liberal Kadets and Mensheviks, but Rubinin and other Bolsheviks were amongst the minority.

“If only we had news and instructions from Petersburg,” he said desperately to Ivan, “or a better organization, we might take hold of this movement now and direct it. This is revolution, but it has caught us unawares.”

For twenty-four hours there was no authority in Moscow, but the crowd was not ill-humored. Epaulets and decorations were torn off unpopular officers and gendarmes were chased and beaten, but there was little bloodshed or looting. On March third it was announced that the Czar had abdicated and that a provisional government had been formed in Petersburg by the Liberals, Prince Lvov and Miliukov. There had been talk of the Czar’s brother as Emperor, or his son, but it came to nothing: the Romanov dynasty had been drowned in a flood of hatred and contempt.

Through it all Ivan and his fellow Bolsheviks raged

powerless. Events had moved too fast for them; they had no control over the masses, no program of action, no clear or resolute leadership. What might have been a golden opportunity slipped like water between their fingers.

By the middle of March the new government was firmly in the saddle with Menshevik support. The Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet had been lulled to calm despite Bolshevik protests, and order was once more established. As Rubinin put it bitterly, "The workers and soldiers of Petersburg moved suddenly of their own volition and czarism was shaken to the ground like a rotten plum. But the masses acted unconsciously and we were unprepared. Perhaps the British knew what they wanted and had their own directives; I believe that they are behind this Liberal government, to hold Russia steadfast to their war." He was speaking at a meeting of the Bolshevik organizers in his section on March third. There were eighteen cells now, eighteen red dots in the green circle on his chart instead of nine six weeks before. "I have word from Petersburg," said Rubinin. "The new government as we expected has made a demagogic play of freedom. In Petersburg the factories are forming soviets as an expression of the workers' will. The same will happen here, is already happening."

"Yes, yes," shouted voices, "there is a soviet in my factory"—"and mine"—"and mine."

"I was sure of it. Within a week every plant in the city will have its workers' council. Now, comrades,

you must consider this situation objectively. Do any of you think that you will be more than a small minority in your factory soviets?"

There was no reply.

"I thought so. The Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries will outnumber us inevitably. Our leaders foresaw this, and I will read to you the message from Petersburg. It says, 'Our first slogan must be "All Power to the Soviets!"' It does not matter whether the majority of the soviet in any factory or organization is Menshevik or Social Revolutionary.

"These instructions are clear—they mean that all of you must do your utmost, you and your comrades in the cells, to encourage the mass of your workers to create and support the soviets. You will be able to do so because the new government declares that speech is free in Russia, that any man may get up and say what he pleases without fear. Henceforth our Party newspapers will be published openly instead of underground—you must use them as your guide and textbook. Meanwhile you must spare no effort to get yourselves elected to your factory councils. Every Bolshevik on a workers' soviet today is a seed to multiply a hundredfold in the months ahead of us."

Their hearts were exultant as they walked homewards. The streetcar service had stopped, not from a strike, but because the cars could not make their way through the dense crowd. All Moscow, it seemed, was in the streets tonight, and on every corner there were speakers on barrels, wagons, or improvised platforms,

haranguing the multitude. The eyes of men and women shone strangely. At times the crowd would halt and cheer, shouting and singing by sudden impulse; elsewhere they danced wildly; it seemed that the whole people was overcome by intoxication. Through it all there rolled like a keynote the word *Svoboda*: freedom. Freedom! Freedom! At last they were free to shout and cry and sing and dance and talk and listen! The gendarmes were gone and all the barriers were broken; they were free at last. The thought of it thrilled them like strong drink and excited them to frenzy.

Klishko was caught by the popular emotion and babbled eagerly of the glorious future, but Ivan was less sure. "I don't like it," he said, unconsciously repeating Nadya's words. "I don't like it. There's no order in this madness, no unity or soberness of purpose—I don't like it."

"Yes," said Tolya thoughtfully, "you are right, comrade. There is nothing real in this noise and folly. Unless I am much mistaken our task has scarcely begun, and the hardest work is yet to come."

When Ivan got back to his lodging, the woman Natasha took him by the arm and dragged him into the tiny room that she shared with her small son. He was startled by her vehemence. For weeks he had been accustomed to regard her as another of the automata, preparing tea and food in the morning before he went to work and keeping the room where they slept in some sort of order. Each week he paid her seven

rubles, greeted her politely with good night or good morning, and brought a packet of candy from time to time for the little Vasha. He never dreamed that the child adored him and had boasted to all his friends of "the man who lives at our house, who's a soldier and got wounded and has iron legs, and can hit a running rabbit with a stone at two hundred yards. Look, he gave me this candy. He's my friend, you understand, and one day I'll get him to come and tell you all about the war." Natasha, too, had been nothing to Ivan, but tonight, unexpectedly, she became real.

"Sit here," she cried, smoothing a space on the end of the bed she shared with Vasha, "and keep quiet or you'll wake the *malchik*, and when he begins we'll never have a chance to talk. Now tell me, Ivan Gregorovich, what is happening? I know you're an educated man—you're no simple worker like the rest of us. Even Tolya, who is the best of my lodgers, thinks that you are his master. What is happening, I ask you?" She lowered her voice. "I wouldn't tell any of the others, but you I trust. In this mattress on which you are sitting I have three thousand rubles in gold—none of your dirty paper. I worked my fingers to the bone to get it, not for myself, but for him"—she jerked her hand towards the sleeping child. "What will happen now? I ask you, what is coming? What do they mean by this new talk of freedom?"

Ivan eyed her doubtfully. "It's hard to say," he said. "The face of things is changing, that is clear, but what the changes mean I do not know."

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"Oh, don't be silly," she said gruffly, "you do know, or you can guess, and you have got to tell me. It may be news to you, but more than once there have been gendarmes here to ask me about you, nosing and snooping to find out what you did in your spare time and where you went and whom you saw. But I told them nothing. In return you must now tell me."

Her voice rose hysterically and wakened Vasha. He sat up rubbing his eyes with sleepy fists, then smiled at Ivan. "Hello, Uncle Ivan," he said, "you could catch me now if I ran away; you don't wear those irons any more." He jumped forward and threw himself into Ivan's arms.

Ivan tucked the blanket round the boy and held him on his knee. "Keep quiet," he said, "your mother and I are talking. Honestly, Natasha, I don't know much more than you do. I don't think—"

"Stop there," she interrupted violently, "and let me tell you. Moscow is mad tonight. To see the way they act you'd think the people were drunk with vodka. This afternoon I went to the market. There was nothing on the stalls; there too they were shouting and acting like lunatics with all this stupid talk of freedom. Freedom for what, I ask you? You can't eat freedom or drink it. At last I found an old peasant, Daddy Long Legs they call him—I've known him for years—who had bread and potatoes and cheese to sell. Do you know what he said: 'Buy all my stock,' he told me, 'buy it all, because there are black days before us. Perhaps tomorrow I will come again and bring food to

sell in the market, tomorrow and the day after, and then, who knows? There is little value any more in this paper money, and our peasants grow suspicious. Perhaps soon we will come no more to your markets to sell good food to workers for dirty paper.' What does it mean, Ivan Gregorovich, I ask you that?"

Ivan settled the child's head against his shoulder so that he could sleep at ease. How pure and confiding this little creature, how ignorant of life and its cruelty! He remembered what Druzak had said about the wolf-sheep people of Russia, the luckless wolf-sheep, the leaderless people of Russia, and how Druzak had added, "But the time is coming when they will turn and rend their masters, and we shall give them leaders, we Bolsheviks. We shall lead them to kill their masters and to break what their masters have built." He was a Bolshevik, wasn't he, but what lead had he for this woman?

"I don't know," he repeated, "but I give you this advice. Keep your gold money in these days of trouble, and spend the paper we pay you, I and my comrades, for our lodging. I will help you if I can, and so will Tolya. That I know, but beyond that I know nothing. Tomorrow's journey is a jump in the dark, as they say in my village."

Natasha took the sleeping boy from his arms and put him back in bed. "I believe you," she said slowly. "Forgive me to have troubled you, but life is hard for me. Oh, God, these are days of doubt and sorrow. But

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I will buy food, that's what I will do, buy food. And perhaps, Ivan, when you need it you will find it here."

After those burning days the factory settled back into routine save that luncheon hour became an occasion for noisy speeches, and there was a mass meeting outside the gates with more speeches each evening at seven o'clock when work was over.

All Moscow was talking those days. It was like the breaking of an icebound river in the spring. All the barriers against speech were swept away and everyone was talking, trying to outshout his neighbor. There was a flood of words, rushing like a torrent sweeping everything before it. Ivan and his friends talked too, but quietly, in private. He and Klishko and Tolya had been elected to the factory soviet, but not one of them had spoken yet in any public meeting. Twenty members of their Bolshevik cell were also elected out of a total of a hundred. Only Ivan represented them on the committee, which numbered nine. The majority of the soviet and their committee too were S.R. and Menshevik.

The president, an old metalworker named Suvarin, said at their first meeting, "This is a good shop; the bosses have treated us decently on the whole. I know that times are changing, but the bosses have built this factory with their brains and money, no less than we have helped them with our work. I say we can co-operate with them, and I may tell you, comrades, that

they are willing to co-operate with us. Their interests and ours are identical; we couldn't run the factory without them, and they need us too. I know that some of you"—he looked at Ivan—"think different. You believe that the factory should belong to the workers only. You are wrong; there is more to running a factory than brawn and muscle. There is the technical side, the engineers; and the financial side, the bookkeepers; and the management, which gets for us the orders and the raw materials without which the factory cannot exist. You may be assured, comrades, that our committee will stand up for your rights, that we shall have a bigger share than hitherto of the profits, that our food and living conditions will be improved. And in this, as I said before, the bosses are willing to meet us halfway, but I beg and implore you"—again he looked at Ivan—"not to listen to agitators who are trying to destroy the partnership between capital and labor, which has now begun in Russia, and which is the only true hope of success and happiness for us all."

The applause this speech received left no doubt in Ivan's mind that for the time being he was a minority of one on the committee. He was forced to recognize that their owners had been foresighted above the average, and that Suvarin represented the views of most of the workers. The Bolshevik cell met afterwards, and despite Klishko's demand for a campaign in favor of taking over the factory for themselves, the others agreed that any steps in this direction would be wrong, or at least premature. The opinion of the cell was that

they should do little for the moment save follow Petersburg's orders to support the factory soviet and push for an extension of its powers.

New instructions from Rubinin solved their doubts and gave them a fresh objective. The Bolshevik Central Committee in Petersburg, immensely vitalized by the arrival of Lenin and his comrades from Switzerland and of Stalin and other exiles from Siberia, had adopted as its main platform the slogans, "All Power to the Soviets," and "Peace and Land for the Peasants." The party had decided, Rubinin told them, to use May Day as a great demonstration for peace. It was expected that the workers' parades would bring out a million men in Petersburg and Moscow, and the Party was resolved to seize this opportunity of pressing home to the minds of the workers its demand for peace. Every Bolshevik speaker, every streamer and banner they should carry in procession must have peace as the keynote—peace and all power to the soviets.

By now the spadework of organization had been completed, and the Bolsheviks with full liberty to work above ground, to make speeches in the open, and spread their newspapers and other material, found they won recruits rapidly. They made little attempt to test newcomers for "orthodox Marxism," as it was later called. It was enough to give a pledge of obedience, to accept the Party slogans, and to pledge themselves to fight for workers' ownership when the time came. In these days Ivan and Klishko reaped the benefit of

their careful earlier work in selecting men they could trust. By the end of April their factory cell had increased to a hundred and eighty members and had taken the place of the S.R.'s as the second largest political group after the Mensheviks. At a mass meeting held on the afternoon before May Day to re-elect the factory committee and choose five delegates to the central Moscow soviet the Bolsheviks obtained four places instead of one, thanks to a last-minute compromise with the Social Revolutionaries, and Ivan was chosen as one of the five delegates to the city soviet. The other four were Mensheviks, led by Suvarin.

An hour before it was light on May Day morning the Bolshevik group was lined up with red banners in the open space outside the factory, its leading files already occupying the entrance to the street along which their procession would march towards the center. All Bolshevik cells had received the same orders, to head their factory processions wherever possible. During the past two weeks Ivan had held simple drills so that his men were formed in squads of forty, with squad leaders to hold formation and pass down orders. He and Tolya in front carried a wide red banner with the slogan in white letters, "Stop the Capitalist War." Other banners read "All Power to the Soviets," "Down With the Bosses," "We Want Peace," "The Factories Belong to the Workers," "Why Fight for the French and English?" and "Peace and Land to the Peasants." And one more, "German Soldiers Are Our Brothers."

As the morning passed it seemed that the whole

city was moving. Bands were blaring, flags flying, and the confusion was colossal. For hours they marked time or advanced by inches, and it was not before two o'clock that Ivan's column advanced slowly into the Red Square. The great open space was a sea of banners and streamers held high above the heads of the masses so densely crowded that they could scarcely breathe. Speakers were addressing the crowd from platforms at various points along the square, but the din was so great that hardly any of their words could be heard. At one moment when they halted near a platform, Ivan caught a fervid appeal to continue the War and "not break faith with our gallant allies." Other speakers voiced the same refrain, "Russia's honor is at stake," and "We cannot betray our comrades at the Front." It was clear that the government had mobilized all its forces in favor of the war.

"The swine are earning their English money," he shouted to Tolya. "Let's edge in here near one of these fellows and shout him down."

During the two hours that they were in the Square, mostly at a standstill but occasionally moving forward a few steps, Ivan saw that the Bolshevik units had followed the same tactics wherever possible. Before each platform there was a cluster of red banners, and countercries of "No More War," "Down With the War," "Give Us Peace and Land," prevented the speakers from making effective appeal.

It was dusk before they marched out of the wide street into the Serpukov Square a mile from the Krem-

lin on the south side of the river. They forced their way through the crowd, but at the entrance to the street leading to the Donskoi Monastery they were met by a body of foot-soldiers, squat swarthy men from the Don in black Cossack capes. Their column was headed with banners proclaiming in black letters on yellow background, "Fight on to Victory," "Workers of Moscow, Support the Front," "The Army Trusts the Workers," "Down with Peace," "Down with the Germans," "Give Us Cannon and Munitions."

"Make way for us there, you damned traitors," shouted a big Cossack, reaching to pull the banner from Tolya's hand. Instantly the two groups were in conflict, shouting, wrestling, and hitting with fists and the poles of their banners. For a time the Bolsheviks made progress; they outnumbered the soldiers two to one and were thrust on by the mass behind them. Ivan found himself at grips with three Cossacks. He knocked one spinning and seized the banner "Fight on to Victory" and tried to wrench it down. The second man holding it let go and it fell on Ivan's face like a blanket. He heard a cry, "Look out for the knife," and struck blindly before him. The blow at his heart was deflected, but he felt a sharp pain in his right breast. As he struggled to free his head he heard the swift banging of a machine gun, near and loud, then a blow crashed on his head, and he fell senseless.



CHAPTER XIV

IVAN LAY on a narrow bed with a high white screen round it. His head was clear, but he felt empty, without strength, and when he drew breath there was a stab of pain in his right side. His hand looked fragile and transparent as he raised it to his bandaged head, and there were other bandages strapped tight round his body. He rapped feebly on the wall of the screen. A young woman came, in the white uniform of a Red Cross sister.

"Oh, how splendid," she cried, "you're conscious. Don't try to speak. I'll fetch the doctor at once." He heard her steps patter off across the floor.

A moment later a bearded man, also dressed in white, was standing by Ivan's bedside. "This is much better," he said, "I was afraid—that is to say—er—now I don't want you to talk but wave your hand forward for yes and sideways for no. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Ivan waved his hand forward.

"Good, that is as I hoped. Are you hungry?"

Ivan made a slight forward movement with the hand.

"Fine. Sister, bring some soup." He turned again to Ivan. "Now, young man, you've had a pretty close call; in fact I feared yesterday evening that you might not pull through the night. That's why we had the screen round your bed, but it won't be needed any longer. After you've fed the patient, sister, you can take it away. Does your head hurt much?"

Ivan made a gesture of assent. There was a dull ache in the back of his head, but it was not very painful.

"All right, now drink this and go to sleep. That's your best medicine."

Ivan sipped the hot soup and felt better. Before the sister had moved away the screen he was already asleep. For the next forty-eight hours he slept, with brief intervals for food, and took small notice of his surroundings, but on the third morning life and strength flowed back to him. His head no longer ached and though it still hurt him to breathe, the pain was less acute. He was half-sitting, propped up by pillows, and as he drank his broth he looked about him curiously. He was in the middle of a row of beds on one side of a long low room with whitewashed walls and ceiling. There was another row of beds across the room. All were occupied save the bed on Ivan's right. The sheets and blankets were new and clean, so Ivan judged he must be in a high-class hospital.

"How did I come here," he whispered to the sister, "and what's your name?"

"Maria Petrovna," she said, "but you'd better not talk yet. I'll tell you. You were brought here late at

night more than a week ago after you had been struck down in a fight with the Reds in the workers' quarter on the south side of the river. You were stabbed in the lung and had concussion of the brain. One of those dreadful anarchists must have hit you with a club. During the fighting someone fired a machine gun—no one knows who it was, so they say, but I'm sure it was one of the traitors because you were driving them back. There was a panic after that and a dozen bodies dead or left for dead on the pavement. Then some horrible people came out and stole the clothes off the bodies—how can they do things like that and call themselves human beings? Your body lay stripped under the banner you'd been carrying. Do you remember it?—it said 'Fight on to Victory.' They found you were still breathing and brought you here, Officers' Hospital Number Seventeen. If you're not an officer you deserve to be for making such a splendid fight against those traitors."

"Sergeant," Ivan whispered, and the girl chattered on, "Never mind, I expect you'll be promoted when you get back. Many officers will be needed for the new armies and promotion will be less strict than in the past; I hear that many underofficers have been promoted already. We tried to get in touch with your detachment—it was the Third Cossack Rifles, wasn't it?—but they went back to the Front the next day. The government is preparing for a big offensive—they had hoped to make it at the same time as the great attack in France, which began two weeks ago. It's strange we

don't hear more of that—at first the French made progress, but there has been very little news the last few days. Does your head hurt now? No? That's good. Well, lie here quietly and don't try to talk. If you don't sleep I'll bring you some picture magazines." She hesitated, then added, "Do you know how to read?"

"Oh, yes," said Ivan, "anything. Please bring some magazines and perhaps a newspaper."

After that he mended rapidly. The dagger aimed at his heart had not penetrated deeply into his lung and the wound soon healed. Two weeks after his admission to the hospital he was promoted to solid food, fish and chicken, and the bandage was removed from his head. As he moved his neck, glad to be rid of it, a hearty voice hailed him from the third bed on his left, "Well, I'm damned," he heard, "where in hell did you come from? Don't you remember me from Kharkov?"

Ivan turned and recognized Alexei Markov, the friend who had given him his boots and tunic in the Kharkov café the night he had hit Pigface with the bottle.

"Good Lord, Alyosha, I'm glad to see you. How did you get here?"

"A shell fragment smashed my knee four weeks ago, and I had a hell of a time at first; then they brought me here. I tell you, boy, this place is fine—it's only for officers. Two weeks after you'd gone they took six of us who could read and write and sent us to an officers' training school. We were there all autumn, lived like fighting cocks, and I came out as an ensign. I'm a full

lieutenant now, just think of that. I was wounded the third of April in a small attack we made to show the Germans that the new government meant business, and some fathead wanted to cut my leg off in a base hospital. We'd moved to the northern front near Smolensk. Luckily they changed their minds and sent me here instead. This place is all new, you know, only opened six weeks ago—it was somebody's private house, and all the nurses are swell Society girls. They put my knee in plaster of Paris, and the doctor says I'll be able to walk again in a month or two, though he thinks it may always be stiff. Who cares for that, I say? Better your own stiff leg than a stiffer one of wood. God, boy, I'm glad to see you!"

Ivan was happy too, but he was a little nervous lest Alyosha might be indiscreet, and when the sister came with his supper he told her he had found a friend and asked if it was possible to have him moved to the bed on his right, which was still vacant.

"Why, of course," said Maria Petrovna, "I don't need to ask the doctor—I'll do it myself. Look how easily the bed moves out. It runs on little wheels—the latest thing from England. We can wheel a patient straight into the operating room across the hall without his having to get up; there's nothing to do but lift him from the bed to the table. It's wonderful. You see, on this floor there are only surgical cases; the sickness wards are on the floors above."

She slid Markov's cot into the vacant space on Ivan's right and pulled the beds close so that there was

only a foot-wide table between them. "There," she said, "now you can talk over old times and you won't bother the others. But you must promise me to go to sleep in good time, and don't raise your voice. Your lung is healing nicely, but it's better not to talk too loud." She smiled brightly and hurried off down the room.

"Look here, Alyosha," said Ivan hurriedly, "I've got to talk to you about a lot of things. It's a hell of a mess."

"Don't I know?" chuckled Alyosha. "I suppose you know you killed that bastard, laid his head wide open so that his brains were trickling over the floor like soup when they picked him up."

Ivan nodded. "Yes, I heard," he whispered, "a good riddance too, the *sookin sin*. Well, after I left you I got back to my camp and by a stroke of luck there was a sergeant there named Mordkin who didn't know anyone. He had a leave paper that night for Moscow, but didn't want to go there because his folks had moved back to the Volga and he was broke. He sold me his leave for ten rubles and I got clean away. Then a friend fixed me up with a fake injury, gave me the papers of a man who had died, and with them I got a job here in Moscow, and have been here ever since. My name's now Fodor, Ivan Gregorovich, first-class private discharged from service due to spinal injury instead of Sergey Sergeyich Torov as before. So don't make a mistake and call me Sergey."

"That's all right, I'll be careful, but I don't quite

understand. They said here when they thought you were dying that you were an officer or underofficer of the Cossack Rifles who had been hurt in a fight with some pacifist gang. What did you tell them about that?"

Ivan scratched his head in uncertainty. Markov had had no love for the officers and bosses in the old days, but now he was an officer himself, which might have changed his views. "I know they thought that," said Ivan, "but never mind that now. Tell me what you've been doing, and how things are at the Front, and how you lived at the training school. Were there any pretty young ladies to teach you how fine it was to be an officer?"

"To hell with that," said Alyosha hotly, "although there was a girl, and a nice one too, none of your pretty ladies but the nurse of the commandant's children. We had to be careful, but we had no end of a time together. For me it was a marvelous chance to get away from the war, God damn it, for three or four months. And wasn't it just my luck to get this crack on the knee the second week I was back at the Front. To hell with the Front, I say! And to hell with the army, too! I expect my knee will bar me from active service anyway, but if they think I'd take a job in the army at the rear, they're damn well mistaken. What I'd like to do is go out and shoot some of these fat bastards who've been getting rich while we've been fighting. And to hell with the bloody English, and the French. I hear they're spending money like water to

make us start a new offensive. Let them fight their own war, I say; what this country wants is peace." His voice was low, but it shook with passion.

Ivan smiled in relief. He knew this man well—a bluff peasant from the north without a scrap of guile. "They made a mistake," he whispered, "here, about me. I was fighting against those blasted Cossacks, not with them. I'd been to the demonstration on the Red Square with the workers from my factory, and if you want to know, our banners were shouting for peace at any price, and land for the peasants."

"That's the stuff," breathed Markov, "that's what I've been thinking: grab the land from the owners and keep it for ourselves. Go on."

"We ran into these Cossacks on the corner and had a fight with them. They had banners too, demanding that the war be continued. I grabbed one of them, 'Fight on to Victory,' or some stuff like that, and the damned thing fell on my head and I couldn't see anything. Then someone stabbed me and hit me on the back of the head at the same time. That's all I remembered until I woke up here, but the sister said a machine gun began firing—in fact, that's the last thing I heard before they hit my head—and several people were killed and afterwards the bodies were stripped and left there in the street. When they found me I was still breathing, and this banner lay over my naked body, so they thought I was a soldier patriot and brought me here. I told them my name was Fodor and

that I was a sergeant in the Cossack outfit and left it at that."

"To hell with soldier patriots!" said Alexei. "What I want is fifty acres of land for myself and a dozen cows from our *barin's* herd. He breeds the best cows in Karelia, got them all from Denmark. Heaven knows what they cost him."

The next morning Ivan asked Markov whether anyone came to see him that he could trust. "I want to send a message," he explained, "to one of my friends at the factory. I suppose they think I'm dead, but I don't like to send it direct."

"There's Peter," said Markov. "Do you remember him—a tall corporal with a scar over his left eye in the second company? He was at the training school with me, and I had word from him three days ago that he'd be here tomorrow on leave. He's fed up with the war, too, and what's more, I'd hate to be his landlord when Peter lays hands on him. They took him into the big house as a footman before the war, and when he spilt some soup one day the master hit him with a bottle, as you hit Pigface, but Peter's skull was thicker—he nearly lost his eye, though—it's still much weaker than the other. He'll take any message you like and keep his mouth shut. He'll be here today or tomorrow."

So Peter took Ivan's message to Klishko, bidding him come to the hospital and wear his best suit and speak softly.

How the little man laughed when Ivan told him

the story, that he was a wounded hero instead of "one of your dirty Bolsheviks." "We thought you were killed," he said. "Those damned Cossacks were joined by a gang of Kadets, and they drove us right back to the canal. We only had two men killed, but most of us were cut and bruised and Tolya got a bullet in the hip, not serious, but he is still laid up. Later they put armed guards on the streets leading to the Serpukov Square from the north, and it was two o'clock in the morning before I could get round to the place where you fell. An old watchman said there had been some bodies in the street, but they'd been carted away two or three hours before. So we gave you up."

"Well, tell Rubinin and the boys that I'm alive and kicking, and ask him what he wants me to do. I ought to get out of here in a week or two, I think."

Ivan asked the doctor next day when he could leave the hospital. The other smiled. "I suppose you're in no hurry to get back to the Front," he said, "and you've certainly earned a holiday. Those damned Reds are getting noisier and more daring every day. So I've arranged for you to spend a couple of weeks at the country house of one of our friends—we use it as a guest home for convalescent officers. You'll have a pleasant time there, and what's more"—he lowered his voice—"some of us want to talk over plans to meet the Red danger. We've learned enough of their aims to be sure they will stop at nothing. Unless we stop them first," he added significantly. "I think you could go to the country in another week—it's only forty miles from

Moscow. I think you most certainly should go there."

Rubinin thought so too when the news was taken to him. "What luck," he said to Klishko, "to get a man of our own into a stronghold of reaction. Tell Ivan to play right up to them. I'll get him a movement list of the regiment he's supposed to belong to, and of course he knows about the Front."

The paper showed Ivan that the Cossack regiment had twice been in action next to his own. "That's easy," he said, "I can talk about that and dodge the other stuff. Now, Klishko, tell Nadya to come and see me and bring my belt with her—she'll know what I mean." His money belt had long been hidden in the girl's apartment.

Nadya was pale and thin. She threw her arms round him and his face and neck were wet with her tears. "I thought you were dead," she sobbed, "and I could not even find your body; I searched everywhere, but no one knew anything. Oh, darling, I missed you so much. I never knew how dear you were until I lost you."

A little to his surprise she raised no objections when he told her that he was going to the country. "I know," she said, "it's orders. You see when I thought you were dead I felt I had to do something, so I went to Klishko, and asked if I could join the Party. He sent me to Rubinin and we talked for an hour. I know a lot of people in business circles, and some of the government officials—I met them through the German businessman I lived with before. Rubinin was glad to

have me. The forces of reaction are working day and night," she concluded seriously.

The next day Sister Maria Petrovna came to his bed with a bundle of clothes. "You can get up today," she said smiling, "and go up to the sun parlor, but be careful not to tire yourself. You'll find your friend the lieutenant up there"—Markov had been hobbling about on crutches for the last five days. "I hope these clothes will fit you. I suppose we should have got you a uniform but as the others are all officers we thought you would be more comfortable in civilian clothes. As a matter of fact, when I was last down at the guest-house several of them were wearing clothes like these."

How golden the Russian spring as the Rolls-Royce slid easily through the forest, how green the trees, how fresh the air scented with new flowers! Ivan breathed deeply—his lung no longer hurt him: it was good to be alive. The car turned sharply into a park with pleasant stretches of green field and big oak trees. On the left a lake was shimmering in the sun. A moment later they saw before them a long white house in Italian style with columns in front of it. It was like the pictures of English country houses which Ivan had seen in one of the illustrated magazines in the hospital. As the car halted, two footmen came running down to help Ivan and his two fellow passengers, and led them into a white square hall decorated with antlers and other trophies, where a log fire crackled pleasantly in the great stone fireplace.

"I will tell the Baroness you have come," said one of the men.

The hostess was a stout woman in the early forties, with a high pompadour of grayish hair. "I am Ekaterina Nicolaievna," she said as they introduced themselves. "You know it is the rule here to speak only by patronymics," she added gaily to Ivan, "so you won't be bothered with questions of rank or preference; we are all friends here. I have heard of you, my young friend, and how bravely you fought those dreadful Reds. You must tell me all about it. I hope the journey didn't tire you too much," she hurried on. "We'll be having tea in a few minutes and then you can meet the others; we're not a large party, just twelve guests including you three and my two daughters and my niece."

They sat chatting by the fire and the footman brought in a big silver tea tray and little tables with cakes and white bread cut thin and buttered. There was no samovar on the tray. "We have tea à l'anglaise," said the Baroness. "My mother, you know, was English, and the English never change about important things like afternoon tea. I don't think we'll wait for the others—ah, here they are now."

As she spoke a group of men and three girls came into the hall. Two of the men were in white flannels and carried tennis rackets, and Ivan noticed that one of the others wore a light gray sport suit. The Baroness made introductions, name after rapid name. "These are my daughters, Lise and Sophie, and this is my niece, Nina Lvovna."

Ivan's heart gave a sudden jump. The third girl, the slim dark one behind the two pretty blondes, yes, there was no doubt; he could not mistake that eager vivid face with its crown of black curls and those clear brown eyes. He had not seen her for five years, but he was sure of her. It was Nina, the daughter of his Master. She nodded casually, intent in conversation with her tennis partner, and moved past him. He sat down dry-mouthed, his hands so shaky that his teacup rattled.



CHAPTER XV

IVAN'S MIND was a blaze of confusion, as he sat on the edge of the sofa trying to make sense of his replies to the questions of the baroness about his "heroic struggle against a horde of anarchists." He had only one clear thought—how glad he was that he had accepted Sister Maria Petrovna's offer to manicure his fingers that morning. So strange is human memory that his first flash of conscious thinking after he saw Nina was not the old days when she and he and Mikhail had played together, but the contemptuous eyes of Lia, the girl he met in Kharkov, when she looked at his fingernails, ugly and broken, the nails of a common soldier. During the month in hospital his nails had grown long, and his fingers were thin and pale. The little sister had blushed when she offered to trim them for him, but now he was glad that he'd said yes—his nails were polished and well shaped.

But what did he think about Nina? That was what puzzled him after he'd escaped from the tea party and sat upstairs on the balcony of his bedroom, looking out across the park. Damn her soul, she smacked my face—I'll show her—she's more beautiful than ever,

how shining her eyes and that crest of curls above her forehead, the most beautiful thing I ever saw, a million times better than any other girl I've known. And why didn't she recognize me? It's just like all of them, these aristocrats, what do they care for friendship? They have no hearts, think only of their own pleasure, talking about tennis to that stupid fellow in the white flannels, damn her soul. But how beautiful she is, and yet how much the same! I'd have known her among ten million—why didn't she know me? And if she did know me, what then? That Yavsina story might come up, they may have heard I killed the commandant. What a mess that would make, although I'm sure she wouldn't make it. Oh, God, what shall I do? She must recognize me when we talk. I know it's five years since we met—she went off to England the second year Mikhail and I were at school in Petersburg, and she was only twelve then, but we'd spent all the holidays together, the three of us, and I haven't changed so much as that. How she made Mikhail and me do what she wanted, always we did it, like slaves to her. She hasn't changed much. Nina, have I changed? I ought to have changed, I ought to hate these bloody aristocrats, this daughter of my landlord. But how can I hate her? I can't hate Nina. And what is my duty to the Party? They told me to come here, didn't they, to find out the plots of this Kadet crowd to smash us? Can I plot against Nina, or is she plotting against me, against us? Can I stay here and spy on her, whether she knows me or not, or will she fail to know me? She

can't fail to know me, but I can fail to know her.

Suppose she says, "You are Ivan, I know you," or "You remind me very much of someone I used to know—isn't your name Vanusha?" Would she say that to him, that old name, her name and Mikhail's name for him? Whatever she said he could reply coldly, "I think, Nina Lvovna, you are making a mistake; you are confusing me with someone else. I am a sergeant in a Cossack regiment, I come from the Don country where the Cossacks live. My father raised horses in the green meadows beside the slow Don River. I'm sorry that I didn't know you before, but I hope we can get acquainted here." Why not talk like that to her, easily, without strain? Yes, that was the best way. Then there'd be no question of Yavsina and the killing, no risk of echoes from the past to spoil his duty in the present. Yes, that was it. If she did recognize him, and after all perhaps she wouldn't, he'd look at her blankly and say, "I think, *Fräulein*, you must be mistaken"—he might even say it in German, that would help to fool her. "I am sorry but I come from the Don, I've never been in the north before. You must be misled by an accidental likeness."

He dined that night in his room. His hostess herself suggested it. She came in to see him an hour after teatime, and said, "I'm sure you're tired, Ivan Gregorovich; you would doubtless prefer to rest tonight. Here, you understand, it is Liberty Hall, as my English mother used to say. There is no question here of titles or precedence, and as far as possible we try to avoid

the topic of war." Did she think he was embarrassed, he wondered—yes, doubtless that was it, a sergeant of Cossacks, stage-struck and shy in the company of officers and gentlemen. Damn their rank and gentility, what did he care for that? Nevertheless, there was something kindly and generous in this woman which warmed his heart. In a way she was like Hilda, speaking kindly without anything to gain. He liked her and answered gently, "You're too good to me, Ekaterina Nicolaievna. I am tired, but it makes me ashamed. You are so good and gracious, and—"

"You silly boy, why talk like that? Our friends who come here have been in hospital. Of course I understand and tomorrow I'll have them bring your breakfast here. Don't get up before eleven. Is there anything you want? Are you sure you have no fever?" She put a soft warm hand across his forehead.

"No, I think not."

"Well, sleep well, *mon petit*, and come down when you please in the morning, or stay in bed if you like that better. There's a bell here on the table and I've told the valet to look after you most carefully. If there's anything you want in the night you only have to ring."

Ivan bent and kissed her hand, to his own surprise.

When Ivan came down in the morning the big hall was empty but one of the blonde daughters of the house, Sophie, was reading a book on the veranda. She jumped up when she saw him. "Good morning,"

she said, "I hope you feel less tired. The others have all gone to see the greenhouses at the Uspenskys' place a few miles away and won't be back until lunch. Would you like to sit here in the sun or shall I show you round the garden?"

She chattered gaily as they strolled along the well-kept paths between the beds of flowers. "I suppose you think it's strange of me talking to you alone like this, but Mother's mother was English and my sister and I were educated in England, and things over there are different. When Lise and I came back last summer after finishing school we couldn't get used to all the fuss they make here about chaperones and young girls never being alone with men. They'd think that silly in England. Don't you think my cousin's lovely? I always think dark coloring is so much more distinguished than blonde, and she's so clever and has so much life and energy. There's something strong in her, like steel. There, I think this is the prettiest part of the garden. My mother copied it from her grandfather's place in Surrey."

"Yes," said Ivan. "When I first saw your house and park it reminded me of a picture of an English country house I saw in a magazine in the hospital."

"Oh, I must tell that to Mother; there is nothing you could say that would please her more, because, you know, she does try to run this place on English lines. Luckily there is no village near here. Aren't the peasants being dreadful nowadays? One hears the most awful stories about their seizing land and attack-

ing landlords. I can't understand what's come over them. I suppose it's the war and the Red agitators with their German money. But our people on the estate are more like friends than servants, just as they are in England. The butler, for instance—you will see him at lunch, he was away yesterday—he came with my grandmother from England and when she died he at once moved here. He knew my mother when she was a baby, and still calls her Miss Kitty most of the time. It is quite touching. And the grooms—are you fond of horses? Because if you are you can go riding any time, you only have to ask—they're English, too, the head groom and two of his helpers. Or perhaps you like tennis? Do you?"

"I don't play well," said Ivan, "but I like it," and his mind flashed back to the asphalt court behind his Master's house where he used to play with Nina and her English governess and Mikhail. "It's a long time since I've played," he said. "The war, you know, but I suppose I'd soon pick it up again."

Sophie looked at him. "You're so different from what I thought," she said naively. "I mean I don't want you to think me inquisitive, but Mother said you were in a Cossack regiment, and yet you look and talk like one of us. And I noticed you used a German word just now when you were talking about the illustrated papers. Do you know German?"

Ivan spurred his imagination. "My father wasn't a Cossack, but a Russian from the Baltic provinces, and my mother was German—she was born in Riga. He'd

been overseer on the property of one of the Baltic barons"—he groped in his mind, what had Hilda said?—"Baron Osten-Zachen in Courland, who was interested in bloodstock and bought a property on the Don in the Cossack country. My father went there to take charge of it, but he and my mother died in the cholera epidemic of 1912 and there wasn't much money left. He had wanted me to go to the university at Rostov, but I couldn't, and then the war came and I enlisted, under age."

"How old are you?"

"Nearly twenty, and although I'm only a sergeant I hear that the new government is sending underofficers to training schools to get commissions. The fellow in the next bed to me in the hospital had done that, and that's what I hope to do."

He liked talking to this girl with her frank un-Russian ways and began asking her about England. He didn't wholly believe the tale she told him of conditions there, that there was mutual respect between the landlords and the peasants and that the latter were never beaten; it was too good to be true. But he was interested by the English passion for games. Did she really mean that half the people in England spent their leisure time playing with balls, little hard balls at games called golf and rackets, big balls at football, tennis balls and handball and the rest of it?

At lunch Ivan was fascinated by the butler. Sophie had been right—the man was worth watching. He was tall and stout with a square red face, which wore an

expression of the utmost benevolence, and long mutton-chop whiskers like the pictures of Nicholas I. He left the serving of food to the footmen, but handed round the wine himself with a dignity which held Ivan spellbound.

Nina was sitting across the table a few places down. Was he mistaken, or did she look at him once or twice with curious intentness? He noticed, too, that the Baroness kept conversation on a light level; each time it veered towards the war or politics or peasant uprisings she would ask another question about the greenhouses or talk about her own garden or the flowers and trees in England.

After lunch Ivan went back alone to the terraced garden near the lake, which Sophie said was copied from the English model. For the first time in his life the peaceful beauty of nature warmed his consciousness. How pleasant it was to smell the flowers and watch the painted butterflies, to see the fish making rings in the clear mirror of the lake as they rose for flies.

"Would you like to row on the lake?" a voice interrupted him. "We might go over to the island and sit in the little temple. The view of the house from there is quite delightful."

It was Nina, so straight and slim in her white costume that he was reminded of her cousin's phrase, "There's something strong in her, like steel."

"We can take one of these boats," she continued, "but I am not going to allow you to row because it might be bad for your lung. You sit there at the back

and I'll row you, but we won't go straight to the island; we'll circle the lake first, then row across from the point where the trees are. I never knew what rowing was like until I went to England. They are so fond of it over there, and last year I went with my cousins to Oxford—that's one of the two big universities—to see the boat races. It was terribly exciting. They all start in a row about ninety feet apart, eight men in each boat, and try to catch the one ahead of them. Then the next day every boat that has caught another changes places with it—they race every day for six days—and in the end the one that is first is called 'Head of the River' and that's the winner."

Ivan did not understand her but her voice was sweet, a little deeper than of old, and it thrilled his heart. He made a pretext of looking past her to steer their course, but each time their eyes met his nerves quivered and it seemed to him that she was watching him too.

"My cousin Sophie thinks you're wonderful," she said, as they landed at the island and strolled up to a miniature Greek temple, half hidden among the trees. "Let's sit here on this stone seat. Now, isn't that delightful?"—she pointed to the long white house with the bands of colored flowers before it and on either side and the soft green grass of the lawns. "She says you didn't talk much but that your eyes are the deepest blue she ever saw. Once I knew a boy with eyes like yours, but that was long ago. His name was Ivan, too, but he wasn't born in Courland and he was a truthful

boy who never told monstrous lies to pretty blonde girls. Vanusha, how dare you tell Sophie all that nonsense, and how dare you pretend not to know me? Oh, Vanusha, I'm so happy, I did not know what had become of you." She caught his hands and held them tight. "Don't lie to me, I won't have it. You've got to tell the truth."

What could he do, and where was last night's resolve to say coldly, "*Fräulein*, I think you are mistaken"? He could not do it. "Of course I know you," he whispered—why was his mouth so dry?—"but you didn't know me. Why didn't you know me?"

"I never noticed. I was talking to Alexander Ivanovich about the tennis. Then you went to bed early, and I didn't see you again until lunch today, but Sophie raved about you so much before lunch that I looked at you, and of course I recognized you at once. Do you remember what a nasty little girl I was? Even then I knew how blue your eyes were. Do you remember that, Vanusha?"

"You smacked my face and called me something you never should have heard of. Of course I remember."

"Was it a bad memory or a good memory?" she flashed back.

He made no answer but he felt the hot blood burning his cheeks and forehead. Did he want to weep or smack her face or bend down and kiss her feet? He did not know.

"You must tell me," she said, "what really happened in Petersburg. Misha would never say anything definite, but I knew that you and he were involved in some dreadful scandal, and I am quite certain that it was his fault and not yours. I know my brother Mikhail; he always tries to dodge things—he always did, you know that, too. Anyway, he said that the two of you got into a fight with the police somewhere—I gathered it wasn't a nice place—and you hit a policeman with a candlestick or something, and there was a big scandal and you were exiled. I said to him, 'Misha, you are not telling me the truth, or not all the truth. And why did Father let them send Vanusha away like that? Why didn't you do something?' He was dreadfully upset—you know how Misha looks when he doesn't know what to say. Then he shut up tight and I couldn't get another word from him. I said, 'You're so ashamed of yourself that you don't dare to tell me. I know you, Mikhail Lvovich—you can't fool me.' But he wouldn't say anything. That was only six months ago, when I came back from England. I was five years there, you know, and that's a long time. Misha's in the Guards now; he's a captain. But never mind about all that, I want to hear about you, Vanusha, and what really happened. Aunt Katya says you're a hero and were nearly killed fighting those horrid Reds."

He didn't mean to tell her, he didn't want to, but he told her about what happened in Petersburg and his arrest and exile, about Yavsina and the comman-

dant and his escape, about Hilda finding him and their life together in the woods. All that he told her truly; he didn't want to, but he told her.

Then he grew cautious. He said, "I felt that I was Russian and that it was my duty to fight for Russia. I got a paper from some wretched shirker and took his place in the army. Ours was a Siberian regiment, but we were smashed to pieces in a battle last year when the Germans were advancing, and there weren't enough of us left to build reserves on. I guess they re-formed the regiment later, but at the time they took what was left of us and drafted us into other divisions; that's how I came to join the Cossacks—we were stationed next to them in that battle, but they suffered less than we did." He lied freely about his later adventures at the Front and how his battalion was transferred to Moscow two months before, and of his fight with the "horrid Reds." But he didn't like it—it seemed wrong somehow to be telling lies to Nina, as she watched him closely, eager and vivid with shining eyes.

"I must write to Misha," she said. "I believe it will make as much difference to him that you are alive as it does to me, Vanusha. Because, you see, he felt guilty about it. He knew the truth and that he had let you down. He's my brother and I'm fond of him, but he's not strong, you know." She might have added, Ivan thought, "Like you and me." He knew she meant that. What a girl this was, what a flame in her of life and strength, greeting him, reaching out to him, re-

newing their old friendship—a strong and living girl to meet his life and strength.

He said, "I was nervous when I first saw you. I thought you might be changed; I thought of pretending not to know you and of making some excuse and going back to Moscow, of going away from here."

"Vanusha," she replied, "how could you be so silly? Of course I've changed and so have you, but not in that way. Didn't I once—" she checked herself, but he knew what she was going to say.

"Yes, you did," he cut in quickly, "and smacked my face afterwards and said naughty words. I can hardly believe that you are the same. It doesn't seem true, all this, to meet you here."

"I know, I feel like that too, but you know I don't think like a Russian any more; it's all so different in England. Anyway, it was different between us, wasn't it, from the first? You were my first love, Vanusha, and your eyes are still as blue as ever. Come on, let's go back to the house for Aunt Katya's English tea. That's the way we Russians are, all of us; we think everything foreign is better than our own, whether it's English tea or this dreadful German Marxism. I read Marx, by the way; that may surprise you. And what's more, it's not so stupid as some of our people think. But it's not Russian. Are we never to have anything of our own save Tolstoy or Kropotkin with their woolly theories? Why take stuff from foreigners? Is there no truth or courage in the Russian soul? In England people aren't afraid of thinking, but that's what's

wrong with Russia—all of us talk too much and think too little, or don't think it out. When we think, we think straight sometimes but never far enough—we don't think things out to the end. I call it a lack of courage."

Ivan walked on fire as he went with her down to the boat. It burnt and exalted him to be near her, to sit and watch her and hear her talk. He wanted to tell her so, but couldn't find the words.

"You've changed a lot," she said. "You're so much stronger, I don't mean just bigger and stronger physically, but in your mind, and so much more sure of yourself. It's funny, but before I always thought of you as younger than I am. I know you're two years older really, but I always thought of you as younger, as I do about Mikhail, although he is nearly nineteen, and I won't be eighteen until next August. But now you seem older. What have you done, Vanusha, to grow up so quick?"

"It's not what I did," he said, "but what was done to me. Siberia is a quick school, Nina Lvovna, and the war is a quicker school. In some ways I am old as Death because I've seen Death close so often and played, as someone once told me, on his doorstep. That's a thing you never learned in England. Death is a quick teacher."



CHAPTER XVI

SUDDENLY AND RATHER TO HIS DISMAY Ivan began to think how young he was. In years, of course, he was young, but somehow he had never thought of himself as having any age at all. He had never, he found, been conscious of himself before. He had thought about other people in relation to him, but he had never thought about himself in relation to other people. Did this mean, he wondered, that he was getting old, or did it mean anything—or nothing? Anyway, what did it mean? He thought of the other girls he had known, Hilda and that Lia girl in Kharkov, and Nadya. What did they mean to him and what did Nina mean? He thought and thought but he couldn't think it out. He had been with them in the closest of all intimacies, had shared with them love's ecstasy, but he felt now that they were something trivial and gone away through the background of his mind. Yes, perhaps that was the answer, that they were in the background, whereas Nina was living, fresh and living close before him. No, that wasn't true. Lia, of course, was gone—she was an episode anyway, damn her soul, to be dismissed like a bad dream—but Hilda was living and

present, and so was Nadya. Strange, but even now after meeting Nina he was missing Nadya. He did not miss Hilda, yet his feeling for Hilda, he thought, was deeper than his feeling for Nadya. But Nadya, somehow, was like himself. When he was with her, there was no groping in the darkness or wandering through the forest; with her everything was natural and simple. They were just good friends together, without the shattering uncertainties of love.

And Nina, what about her? That was a question he could not answer, but to which his mind reverted like a caged squirrel on its treadmill. All he knew was that she put a fire in him, a glowing fire in his heart like danger, like the danger to life in war, the exciting fire of peril, the thing which challenged his life and made it dangerous, the exciting fire of danger. And perhaps another thing, too—she was part of his childhood, mixed up with it, intimately; she was part of his childish heart, which no man can forget. He was glad now as he sat in his room before dinner that he had not followed his first idea of pretending not to know her. In any case her approach had been far too direct and sudden for that.

During dinner the conversation turned to politics, despite all the Baroness could do. One of the older officers, a colonel in the Guards, had received a letter from his brother in Petersburg announcing a new wave of strikes and disorder. "The country is going to pieces," he declared positively; "this coalition government is a band of fools or rascals, I don't know which.

If Kerensky is not in league with the anarchists, at least he does nothing to check them. My brother says that the military governor, General Kornilov, wants to make a clean sweep of the most radical elements, but his hands are tied by the government. It's that infamous Order Number One which is at the bottom of the whole trouble; it has ruined discipline in the army. I hear that there are a hundred thousand deserters in Petersburg at present and nearly as many in Moscow, all of them armed, of course. They don't even attempt to hide any longer, and they naturally are the backbone of the stop-the-war policy. They have everything to gain by peace and they contaminate the loyal troops."

"Yes," chimed in another man, "I hear that they are deserting the Front literally by thousands every day. Many of the effectives are reduced to fifty per cent of normal strength. My young captain writes that his company is lower than that and there is no limit to the insolence of the men. He seems to think that an offensive would be sheer suicide, but in my opinion it's the only way to restore discipline, that and of course the cancellation of Order Number One."

"They will never cancel it," cried a third, "the Soldiers' Councils are too strong for that. I agree with you that the situation is far worse than is generally believed. They say that things are better on the Southwest Front, in Denikin's army; the Cossack divisions are trustworthy, I am told, but even there there has been fraternization with the Germans. I can't under-

stand why they aren't afraid that their own men will be contaminated."

"They are far too smart," said another, "the whole thing is a German plot, to begin with. I have it on the best authority that the train which brought Lenin and that gang of scoundrels across Germany carried two million rubles in gold. There was a Red agent in my regiment distributing money like water."

As the discussion continued, Ivan gathered that the idea of a German plot was universal, but he was surprised by the childishness of these men, their utter failure to grasp the facts. All their talk was a waste of words, as if they felt themselves caught in a cycle of events from which there was no escape. Everyone kept saying, "We must act, we must do something to counter the danger," but none of them had anything concrete to propose. How different, he reflected, from the Bolsheviks with their positive policy of word and deed.

Ivan heard many more such conversations in the days that followed and paid little heed to them; they were all the same. Life passed easily like a pleasant dream and he was content to take it as it came. He had been weaker than he knew and at first tired rapidly; a single set of tennis was all that he could manage at the beginning. They lived, he felt, in an oasis of calm and comfort. Fine weather, the effortless luxury of wealth and well-trained servants combined to make something remote from the stress and turmoil of Russia; it must be, he thought, like the English

country house upon which their hostess had modeled it.

Nina was a great and growing delight to him. "I never met anyone like you," he said to her one day. "You are so unlike everybody I have known, why is it?"

"I think it's England," she said. "Things are different there. This house is like a little piece of England, that's what my aunt has tried to make of it, and I think she has succeeded. Have you talked with Perkins yet, Vanusha? He is the most English thing in the world. There is nothing so English as an English butler."

"Yes," he said laughing, "we had a long chat last night, in fact he invited me to his little room and gave me a glass of port. I felt highly honored."

"I know, he likes you. He told my aunt the other day, 'Mister Ivan, that's a fine young gentleman, more like one of our own young gentlemen at home, Miss Kitty, than some of these others, if you'll pardon my saying so.' And that, of course, from him is the highest possible praise. What did you think of him?"

Ivan paused a moment. "The thing that struck me most," he said slowly, "is the strength of his self-respect. He's been a servant, a lackey, all his life, but there's nothing servile about him. He speaks of the Mistress and the Master and the Young Ladies with reverence and affection, and it's quite clear of course that he doesn't for a moment regard himself as their equal; yet somehow you can feel that as a man on his

own ground he is in a way, I mean he thinks himself, as good as anyone alive."

She nodded. "Yes," she said, "the English are like that—they feel free inside, and even the lower classes, as they call them, have a sense of independence. You see it the moment you land at Dover. The porters at the station run for your bags and are glad to take your tip, but they seem so cheerful and friendly about it, as if it was a sort of game. Perhaps that accounts for the difference. The English adore games, all of them; you should see the workers at a football match. I wish it was the same here—what a change it would make if people began to play games in this country as they do in England!"

"Other things will have to change first," said Ivan soberly. "This is no time for playing games in Russia. But tell me more about England."

As his strength returned and he was no longer tired by a swim across the lake or a morning's tennis, Ivan began to chafe at his inaction. This lotus-eating life was not for him, he knew, and he was certain that he could learn little useful here of plans to suppress the revolution by force of arms. These talkers might be willing to fight when the time came, but someone else would have to organize them and give them a lead. He said as much to Rubinin one day, when he drove in to Moscow two weeks after his arrival at the château.

The Jew frowned. "I think you'd better stay there a little longer," he said. "They may be smarter than

you think, and perhaps you may yet hear something useful. We are sure that a counterrevolutionary organization does exist and has plenty of money behind it. Besides, it is doing you a lot of good physically and you will need all your strength. Have you heard anything about the offensive that's coming?"

"Nothing definite, but they expect it to start any day now."

"That's what I heard. Today's the fifteenth, and it was set for the twelfth, but they weren't ready. We are convinced that it will be a failure, and that after it the army will crumble to pieces. Then your job will begin. You won't go back to the factory; when the offensive crumbles, say in another two weeks or so, whenever it is, we'll send you back to the Front to work there. You'll have two lines of approach, the seizure of land, and peace. Lenin says that we must get the soldiers back to the towns for our own revolution, to help the workers against the gendarmes and against any counterrevolutionary troops—there will be some of them—while the peasant soldiers will do the job for themselves in the villages. It has begun already. There have been scores of cases where the landlords wanted to leave land idle and the peasants seized it and the grain for spring sowing, and houses have been burnt and landlords killed. So you go back to the country and keep your ears open for another two weeks and get quite fit and strong again. I still think you may hear something of interest to us."

Rubinin guessed rightly. Three days later the

elderly colonel who had spoken of his brother in Petersburg took Ivan aside after dinner, and said to him, "Have you any news from your regiment?"

"Not much," said Ivan. "I wrote, of course, from the hospital saying that I had not been killed, as they must have thought, but I've had no word from them. I did hear though, in Moscow the other day, that my battalion had been transferred to the Northern Front, I think somewhere southwest of Riga. You know, sir, I was born in that neighborhood; I'm not a Cossack myself but I've lived among them all my life and know them well."

The colonel nodded. "Yes, Ekaterina Nicolaievna told me. Well now, I'm inclined to think—my brother tells me—that's to say—as you are here now—" he hesitated, then seemed to make up his mind. "I'll tell you," he said firmly, "some of us feel that we cannot stand by with folded hands and watch the country go to the devil. My brother writes that an organization is now being formed, has been formed, to fight fire with fire. As you probably know, desertions have been so numerous in recent months that the percentage of officers is much greater than it used to be. It is proposed to form special battalions of officers, and, of course, loyal men too, and to use them without flinching. We can depend on the Cossack troops, I think, and on many cavalry divisions. Things may change if the offensive is successful, but I don't mind telling you that I have little hope of that, and my brother says that the best opinion in Petersburg is pessimistic.

I spoke to the doctor about you when he was here yesterday, and he thinks you will be perfectly fit for service in a couple of weeks. Would you care to join us? I could make arrangements to have you transferred from your regiment for special duty. Can I count upon you?"

"Of course," said Ivan, with all the sincerity he could muster, but he was somewhat uneasy about the colonel's idea of getting in touch with his alleged regiment. In two weeks he would resume service, but not as the colonel imagined.

Through all those long June days ran the thought of Nina, her nearness and dearness. From that first hour on the little island the friendship between them had been close and growing closer—yet there was nothing sisterly in her way towards him. It seemed to him that she regarded him more and more as something that belonged to her, as a possession of value rather than as an independent human being. At first this irked him, but he grew to like it, to enjoy the way in which she took for granted that his time was hers, that he himself was at her full disposal, whenever and for whatever she might desire. It began to seem right and natural, as if it was the fulfillment of her childish words that she was the princess and he her slave. Strangely, he no longer felt revolt against her dominance, and there was an increasing sweetness in the thought that he was her creature, to do with as she willed. He knew that it was unreal and could not last,

that it was only a phase of existence in this charmed oasis, but he was content to enjoy the present and leave the future to fate.

In the early days, after that first kiss of greeting, she had kept him at arm's length, an occasional quick touch on his hand or shoulder, but no other contact. For his part he felt as though he were caught in the current of a river which was carrying him to an unknown bourn. There was no power in him or wish to swim against the stream.

They halted at a station near a town eighty miles east of him out after dinner across to the island in the lake, and they sat once more on the marble bench outside the little temple, watching the round moon rise to make a path of gold across the water, from heaven to their feet.

"I've missed you so much, Vanusha; it seemed that part of me had gone away with you. I don't know what I shall do when you leave here. Put your arms round me and hold me tight, so that I can know you're really back again."

He obeyed, hardly daring to breathe, and she rested her head on his shoulder with a sigh of content. "There, that's better—now I feel whole again. The little piece of me has come back and I find it's my big Vanusha. What does that mean?" she murmured dreamily.

A dim memory stirred him. Who had said that before? Or was it just the opposite? Hadn't Nadya said that? No, it was the opposite— "There is a piece of your heart, Ivan, which belongs to me and no one

must ever take it." How strange life was, and this thing called love, that Nina should tell him he had a piece of her heart and Nadya that she had a piece of his. He wondered what it meant but could not find the answer.

The girl in his arms moved slightly and he felt her lips touch gently on his neck below the ear. "Dearest Vanusha, I am so happy now that I would like to die. If the moon was kind she would strike us both dead, in an instant, without pain. I have never been so happy before. I feel as if I had been wandering alone and looking for something and that now I'd found it and am not lonely any more. Do you feel like that, too?"

"Yes," he said, "exactly that, and I can't believe it's true. Nina darling, I love you."

"Then kiss me, Vanusha, I want you to kiss me."

For a moment all his life and feeling were centered in her lips against his own. They clung to each other with closed eyes, then moved apart simultaneously looking at each other with amazement and delight.

"Oh, Vanusha, I love you."

"I love you, Nina darling."

They rowed back in silence across the golden moon path.



CHAPTER XVII

IT WAS AFTER ELEVEN when they reached the château but the elderly colonel was still sitting by the fire in the hall reading a newspaper. He looked up when they came in, and said lightly, "Ah, you youngsters, I suppose you've been out on the lake this beautiful evening. I've just been reading about the offensive; it began well enough but I'm not so sure about the latest news."

"If you're not sleepy, young man, you might be interested in a telegram I received this evening. I'm afraid it confirms the doubts I expressed to you the other day when we were talking about it." He turned to Nina, "You'll forgive us, mademoiselle, talking shop in this way. I know your aunt doesn't like it but I think Ivan Gregorovich would be interested."

She bade them good night and the colonel continued, "Of course I didn't wish to alarm Nina Lvovna, but the news is bad. Large bodies of troops refused to leave their trenches. Some of them shot officers who were trying to urge them forward, and it seems that even where ground was gained the Germans have begun a counterattack."

He led the way down a passage to his bedroom

which was on the ground floor. "Excuse me if I go first," he said, as he opened the door, "the light is over near the bed." He stepped forward into the room and Ivan followed.

As he crossed the threshold a thick sack fell suddenly over his head and strong hands held his arms tight to his sides. He kicked out wildly, throwing his body sideways, but the grip that held him was firm. In a moment his knees were pinioned also and a rope was wound around him from waist to ankles. He was powerless. He felt himself flung roughly on a sofa, then someone cut the top of the sack with scissors that scratched his nose, and pulled it back over his head. The light was on now and he could see that there were three men in the room: the colonel, a major of artillery, and the young captain who had been Nina's tennis partner on the day of his arrival.

"Well done," said the colonel calmly, "but you'd better lock the door, Sasha. Now, you Bolshevik bastard, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"What does this mean?" cried Ivan. "Are you insane? Why do you attack me like this? It's outrageous—I'll—"

The captain, Sasha, hit him a backhand blow across the face. "None of that," he cried harshly. "How dare you?—"

"Wait a minute." The colonel stopped him with upraised hand. "Let's check the facts first. First of all I will talk, and he can answer later." His eyes and voice were dark and cruel, but Ivan tried again.

"You are crazy, I—"

ONE LIFE, ONE KOPECK

Once more the captain's fist broke the words upon his lips. "Shut up, I tell you. Next time I'll hit you with the butt of this." He picked up a long cavalry pistol from the table.

"Wait, Sasha," said the major, "let the colonel talk."

The elder officer took a sheaf of papers from his desk. "I telegraphed to my brother about you and as it happened he met that very evening in Petersburg an officer of the Cossack regiment to which you pretended to belong. This officer declared first that there was no man called Ivan Gregorovich Fodor—that I think was the name you gave—in the regiment. My brother asked me to telegraph a description of you, as he thought there might have been a mistake about the name. I did that, giving also the details of your injuries. With these data my brother and his friend made further inquiries. I shall read the result to you:

SO-CALLED FODOR NEVER ATTACHED THIS REGIMENT
STOP FROM DESCRIPTION AND NATURE WOUNDS IT
PRACTICALLY CERTAIN HE LEADER GROUP BOLSHEVIK
WORKERS WHICH ATTACKED B COMPANY FIFTH COS-
SACK RIFLES IN MOSCOW MAY FIRST STOP SUGGEST
FURTHER INVESTIGATION MOSCOW.

That's one telegram and I have here another, from Moscow. You Bolshevik swine forget, it seems, that we too have sources of information." He took up another telegram and read:

FODOR, IVAN GREGOROVICH, AGE ABOUT TWENTY
HEIGHT FIVE FEET ELEVEN BROWN HAIR UNUSUALLY

ONE LIFE, ONE KOPECK

DEEP BLUE EYES NORDIC FEATURES LITERATE WITH CULTURED APPEARANCE IS NOTORIOUS BOLSHEVIK AGITATOR WHO WORKED PAST SIX MONTHS SHELL FACTORY NUMBER SEVEN STOP SUSPECTED COMPLICITY IN DEATH POLICE AGENT ILIADOR EPHEMOVICH MALKIN STOP DANGEROUS CHARACTER AMPLY SUPPLIED MONEY ANTECEDENTS UNKNOWN STOP RECENTLY ELECTED BOLSHEVIK MEMBER MOSCOW SOVIET.

He paused and glared at Ivan. "I think," he said harshly, "there is nothing more to be said. You are a Bolshevik, a traitor and a spy. I will admit that you are clever, but we are clever too, cleverer than you think. Have you anything to say?"

"I don't understand a word of it," Ivan began, and for a third time Sasha hit him in the face so that the blood from his scratched nose streamed down to his mouth. It was more than he could bear. "You God-damned coward," he exploded. "It's easy for you to hit a man who's bound; loose my hands for one minute and I'll show you. And as for you," he faced the colonel, "all right, you can have it. Of course it's true, the whole of it, but what do I care? If you think that killing me will save the lot of you—officers, landlords, and speculators, you're wrong. To hell with you all, we will show—"

The pistol butt crashed on his head.

"Vanusha," she said, shaking him, "Vanusha, wake up, what's the matter with you?"

He looked up sleepily and the glare of her flashlight hurt his eyes. "Let me alone," he said, "my head's aching. Let me alone."

She shook him again, her hand clutching his tie and shirt at the top of his chest, shaking him to and fro. "Wake up, Vanusha, you must wake up. My God, can't you hear me?"

He stared at her stupidly. "Why, Nina, what are you doing here? Please take that light from my eyes."

"Drink this," she said, pressing a glass rim to his mouth. He felt the heat of vodka and it cleared his brain. He struggled from her arms to a sitting position. His hands were tied to his sides and his legs were numb from the cords that bound them. Then memory flooded back.

"They caught me," he muttered, "tied me up like this, and one of them kept hitting me. At the end he hit me with the butt of a gun; he said he would and he did."

"Hush," she said, "don't speak so loud—you are in the cellar near the colonel's room. Oh, Ivan darling, this is dreadful. When I first saw you I thought they had killed you, your face was all blood. I've wiped most of it away, but it was dreadful."

The arm which was holding him tightened, and she caught him to her breast and kissed his face and eyes. "I can't bear it," she said, "I thought you were dead when I first saw you."

"But how did you know?—"

"Oh, don't talk, we've got to run away." Her fingers

were fumbling at the knots behind his waist. "Can you sit up?—all right, that's easier—I can untie it. You see I thought when we came in together—I mean the way the colonel spoke to you, it sounded strange to me. He spoke too easily, there was something dangerous—I felt it. I thought it might be something about Sasha. He hated our being friends. I didn't know what it was, but I felt uneasy. I felt it before I got to my room, so I came down again. The colonel's door was locked but I heard Sasha shout at you. Then I knew something was wrong. I crept round on the veranda—the window was open—and I heard it all, everything that they said. Oh, Vanusha, is it true that you're a Bolshevik?"

"If you heard everything, you know it's true. How could I deny it? All they said was true, damn their souls."

"They tied you tight," she said, "but I've got that knot undone; there are two more. What a fool I was not to bring a knife."

"You heard it all, Nina? Then why do you do this? Why aren't you on their side?"

"Don't be stupid," she whispered, tearing at the knot, "don't you know I love you?"

"I heard them say, 'Let's put him in the cellar.' Sasha said, 'Let's kill him now,' but the colonel said, 'Better wait until tomorrow, we have to arrange for the disposal of the body.'"

"I heard them open the cellar door and I heard it slam and bolt. They talked for fifteen minutes while

I waited; then Sasha and the major went upstairs to bed. I waited a long time until the colonel's light was out; then I went round to the garage and got the little car, the two-seater, and broke the wires in the big one so that it couldn't run. Then I came here for you. Oh, God, this knot is tight—why didn't I bring a knife?"

"But what about you?" said Ivan. "What are you going to do?"

She sighed in relief. "There, that one's done—this other will be easier. What about me? Why, of course I'm going with you, what do you think, Vanusha? We can drive to the station—it's only three miles away—and catch the two o'clock train for Moscow. Luckily, it starts near here, at the junction ten miles away, so it won't be late."

"But how can you leave them like this—your aunt and your cousins and the rest of them?"

"What do I care about them?" she cried furiously, tearing at the knot. "All I care about is you, I care nothing about them. We'll go to Moscow and then I can go home, or anywhere. I don't care what happens. I don't care about them, Vanusha, I don't care whether you're a Bolshevik or an anarchist or a madman—you are my Vanusha, and I won't let them kill you."

The last knot was undone and he stretched himself and tried to stand. His legs and feet were numb, but he stamped up and down the cellar and the blood flowed back into his veins. How it hurt, like needles piercing him from foot to waist! "But when you get

home," he asked, "won't this make trouble for you?"

"Don't be silly, they can't touch me there. And you heard what the colonel said—the offensive has broken and the whole thing is breaking—the old order is falling to pieces. Our people are shattered and the future is yours. Why, Ivan," she said laughing, "this whole scene may reproduce itself. One day I may be taken captive and you will come to rescue me, like the fairy tales when the youngest son of the peasant comes and marries the princess. Do you remember those stories we used to read in the fat book with the gray cover?"

Ivan caught her in his arms.

"Come on," she said, finally, "and walk softly. The car is at the door."

As they walked through the hall her flashlight wavered or had he grown careless on the threshold of escape? He blundered against a big enamel jar and it fell banging. She caught him by the hand. "Come quick," she said, "they will hear us." There was no reproach for his clumsiness in her voice.

They ran across the hall, out across the portico and down the steps. "Quick," she cried, "you've got to crank it." Ivan jumped to the front of the car and spun the lever, once, twice—the third time he heard the engine purr.

As he fell into his seat there was noise and lights flashing in the house above them, and voices shouting, "Stop there, damn you, stop, I tell you. All right, if you won't"—and the sudden bang of pistols.

Too late. The little car was racing down the drive.

Let them bang away, the car was racing, round this corner, round that, but Nina held it steady, gripping the wheel. Would the gate be open, the gate of the park into the highroad? As they rushed down the last stretch Ivan's eyes were fixed ahead into the darkness. Yes, the gate was open; one more sharp turn—it was the road. They were safe and rushing to the station.

Ivan breathed deeply. "All right," he cried excitedly, "there's nothing more to worry about. If the train doesn't come, we'll run straight on to Moscow. Are you sure, Ninushka, that you disabled the big car completely?"

"Of course I did. I broke the gas line and all the wires I could reach. Oh, Vanusha, isn't this fun?"

He looked at her in amazement. Her eyes were bright in the moonlight and her cheeks were pink, and she was smiling. "How furious they will be!" she continued gaily. "I'd give anything to hear what they are saying. But you were clumsy to knock that pot over in the hall. They nearly caught us, you know, but that makes it more exciting."

"Too exciting," said Ivan, "look there," and pointed to a small starred hole in the middle of the windshield. "A few inches more to right or left and one of us would have had a bullet in the head."

Again she laughed. "That's wonderful. It's like the novels I read in England where the hero and heroine escape from a gang of criminals."

How strange, Ivan thought, were women. This girl had betrayed her friends and saved their prisoner. She

had missed death by inches and been a traitor to her class, but all she could talk of was what fun it was, like English novels.

As they passed the crest of the hill half a mile above the station, they saw the headlights of the train creeping slowly forward in the distance.

"We'll catch it easily," said Nina, "and I'll tell the stationmaster to send a message in the morning for them to come and get the car."

"Why not drive it on to Moscow? You could use it there."

"But it's not mine, it's my aunt's car."

"Well, what of it? She's still got the other one, when they fix it up."

Nina raised her eyebrows. "That would be stealing," she said coldly. "I shall leave the car here so that they can find it in the morning."

Ivan shrugged his shoulders and followed her into the station.

Nina slept on his shoulder throughout the two-hour trip to Moscow. She was exhausted by strain and excitement and her face was haggard in the early light of dawn. She shivered when he woke her, as the train slowed down at the terminus, then looked at him and smiled.

"Oh, yes," she said, "I remember. Well, we beat them, didn't we? But what shall we do now? I suppose the Savoy is the best hotel, or perhaps we could try the Metropole."

Ivan frowned in bewilderment. "I can't go there," he said, "but there's a place where I have friends, near the Kursk Station. We might find something there, or perhaps stay here in the waiting room until later. It's barely four o'clock yet, and we may not find a cab."

"All right," she nodded sleepily, "anything you like, Vanusha. I'm so tired that I can hardly see."

But when they came to the waiting room she wrinkled her nose in disgust. "Oh, this is horrible, I can't sleep here. It's too crowded, to begin with, and it smells disgusting. I couldn't think of sleeping here. Why, even the air is dirty."

The wooden benches on both sides of the room were heaped with sleeping bodies, slumped and huddled together amongst their baggage. Scores more were sleeping on the dirty floor, men, women, and children all together. The windows were closed and the air was foul with the stink of sweat and unwashed humanity.

"Oh, no," said Nina, "I couldn't think of it. It's horrible. How far is this hotel you spoke of?"

"It's right across the city, but perhaps we can get a cab, and, darling, I must warn you it's not a very fine hotel."

"It can't be worse than this. I won't stay here another minute. This is dreadful. Let's look for a cab at once."

They looked in vain, the station yard was empty, so they set out on foot. She dragged heavily on his arm

as they trudged through the deserted streets, until at a corner they came upon an old cabman asleep on his box behind a spavined horse.

Ivan lifted her onto the moth-eaten seat and put his arms around her. She went to sleep immediately, without a word. He was wide awake but he found it hard to reason clearly because the currents of his mind were so different and confused—exultation of escape at the eleventh hour—love and protective tenderness for Nina—rage against the officers who had trapped him and rage at himself for having fallen into the trap. His head ached in sharp throbs and there was a bleeding lump above his forehead where Sasha's gun had hit him—they'd pay for that later. His fists clenched instinctively. But what to do now with Rubinin and the other comrades? What would they think of Nina, and what would she think of them? Oh, Lord, his head ached, and would this cab ride never end, as the poor lame horse plodded slowly along at a jerky walk?

At last they reached the station and rumbled over the cobbles of a side street to Rubinin's hotel. He helped Nina down and gave the cabman a five-ruble note. "Keep the change," he said, "and buy some oats for your horse—he needs them," then banged on the wooden door. Nina slept in his arms while he waited until the porter came, drowsy with sleep.

"What do you want?" he asked. "There's no room here. We are full up, I tell you—go away."

Ivan blazed with fury. "Do you want me to kill you?" he said. "How dare you talk to me like that?"

Let me in at once—I have friends here on the third floor.”

The man gaped at him and saluted. “I beg your pardon, sir, I didn’t know—” and let them pass.

“I don’t like this, it’s dirty,” muttered Nina sleepily, as he helped her up the narrow staircase. “I want to go to the Savoy. Oh, Vanusha, I’m so sleepy.”

“Come on,” he said, supporting her, “you’ll be asleep in five minutes, and we’ll find something better tomorrow.”

One soft knock on Rubinin’s door and the Jew’s face was peering at him, wide-eyed and alert for danger. He did not sleep much, that one, or at least he was quick to wake.

“Oh, it’s you, Ivan,” he said in a tone of relief, “I thought. . . . But what’s the matter? Your face is bloody, and who’s this girl with you?”

“Never mind,” said Ivan, “I’ll tell you that tomorrow, but have you a place for us to sleep?”

“Who’s that,” said Nina sleepily, “I don’t like him. I don’t like this place, Vanusha—it’s dirty, let’s go to the Savoy.”

Rubinin frowned in surprise, then said quickly, “The room opposite, where our comrade stayed, that’s empty. Wait, I’ll get the key.”

Ivan unlocked the door and laid Nina on the bed. “I don’t like this place,” she muttered once more, but she was fast asleep before he had time to cover her with a blanket. He took off his coat, rolled it up for a pillow, lay down upon the floor, and went to sleep.



CHAPTER XVIII

LOVE IS STRONGER than death, they say, but is it stronger than disgust, or dirt, or dreariness, or discomfort? Of course she loved him, Nina knew that, but why must he live like a pig in this horrible hotel? And his friends—the greasy Jew who was fawning and arrogant at the same time, and the thick-faced workers with rough hands and black-rimmed fingernails. And the food they ate—chunks of meat in a greasy stew with slabs of sour black bread. It was all so ugly and repulsive, and the worst of it was that Ivan did not seem to mind at all.

She lunched with four of them that morning, Ivan and the Jew Rubinin and a square red-headed man they called Klishko—he was not so bad and his eyes were friendly when he looked at Ivan—and a fourth whose name she never caught. They were nice enough to her, but it annoyed her that they seemed to take her for granted as Ivan's girl friend. He was as bad as the rest—he paid her no attention, just sat there talking politics. What could they know of politics, these funny little people?

Suddenly Rubinin caught her attention with a drive

of bitter words. "The news is good," he said, "the offensive is broken to pieces and the Germans have smashed through at several points. *Gott sei dank*, there's an end to that nonsense." To her horror she heard Ivan answer, "Yes, that's fine," he said, "the offensive is smashed to pieces. But is it true, comrade, that they've restored the death penalty at the Front?"

Rubinin shrugged his shoulders. "What of it?" he said. "That's only folly nowadays, but you can use it against them when you go back to the Front."

"Oh, you want me to go back?" said Ivan.

"Yes, of course I do. The fruit grows riper every minute. Yes, surely, you must go back as soon as possible."

Ivan nodded. "I think you're right, comrade, I know how the army feels and how to talk to them. Yes, you're right, the sooner I go the better."

Nina sat and heard them, raging. They were traitors these men—they were traitors to their country. It made her sick to hear them talk, but she said nothing until they had gone and she was alone with Ivan. Then she burst out, "What is this, Vanusha? Do you really mean that you're glad the Germans are winning? Have you no sense of decency or patriotism, or have you no sense at all?"

Ivan smiled at her. His head still ached and he had slept badly, and vodka had flowed freely while he talked with Rubinin and Klishko and the other comrade who had just come back from the Front. "Never mind about that, darling," he said loudly, "it has

nothing to do with you and me. You are one of us now, aren't you? You saved my life from those blasted White Guards, and so you're one of us."

"I think your friends are dreadful," she replied, "and you haven't answered my question."

Her voice was cold and sobered Ivan like a douche of water. "What do you mean?" he said. "Didn't you know that I was a Bolshevik when you saved me from those White Guards? Nina, don't look at me like that."

For a moment she faltered. "But, Vanusha, you can't want the Germans to win? At least you will tell me that."

"Of course not, but—"

"But what?" she caught him quickly. "You don't want them to win, but you want us to lose."

"Who are us," he said quietly, and put his hand upon her arm. "Nina, can't you understand that the 'us' you speak of are the worst enemies of the Russian people, far worse than the Germans, the ones we Bolsheviks are fighting? Can't you understand it, darling, that your 'us' are the officers and the landlords, the exploiters of labor and the fat profiteers of capital? We must dash them to the ground and sweep them away with their lackeys and give power to the peasants and the working class."

Then she looked at him aghast. Was this her own Vanusha or a tub-thumping Red on a street corner? She fought to control her anger. "Don't talk like that, Vanusha, I won't have it. You don't know what you're saying. I'll ask you one more question, and you must

think before you answer it because it means a lot—to both of us. Are you a Russian patriot or are you not?"

Ivan stared at her, his mind jumping. Should he tell her the truth or tell her lies, or tell her that he loved her? How could he know that her change from the old life to the new surroundings had been too sharp and sudden, that her revolt was less real than instinctive, that her nerves were strained beyond endurance and that she felt so dreadfully alone?

An older man might have soothed her, but Ivan was young and hot and his head was aching. "You asked me a question," he said, "and I answer it with another. Do you love me or do you not?"

The girl was braver than he and more straightforward. "Of course I love you," she said, "but I love my country, too. Are you with us or against us? Are you a Russian or one of the dirty rats that Lenin has bought with German gold?"

Ivan caught her hand and held it tight. "If you say that again," he said slowly, "you will put a sword between us. Oh, Nina, can't you trust me? Don't you know that I'm no dirty rat to be bought by anyone? Don't you know that, Nina darling?"

Her eyes softened. "Of course I know it, so why bother with these Bolsheviks? You're not really one of them. I don't say you're one of us," as she saw the protest in his eyes, "but what are they to you? Come back home with me, Vanusha, let's go at once and leave this mess of politics. You know my father liked you—he never forgave himself for what happened there

in Petersburg four years ago. Come back with me, Vanusha, and leave Reds and Whites alone." She paused, then went on hurriedly before he could object, "I'll marry you here in Moscow, if you want me, and we'll go back home. . . . Won't you do it, Vanusha dearest?"

Could he resist those brown eyes of Nina, asking him, bidding him? How easy to run away and leave it all, as they had run away the night before, to challenge all conventions and forget all prejudice.

She saw him waver and thought to press her advantage. "It will be so lovely at home in the country—for a honeymoon. Do you remember the moon last night when we rowed back across the lake?"

Of course he remembered it, but he remembered more than that—the smooth-voiced colonel luring him into the trap, and Sasha and the rest of it. So that was what she wanted, that he, not she, should be a traitor to his class. From a practical point of view it was absurd; they would track him down and kill him—that was certain. Hot words sprang to his lips but he held them back. "I can't decide at once," he said, "I must think it over, and my head aches."

She took his head in her arms and held it to her breast. "Darling," she said, caressing him with gentle fingers, "of course your head aches with this dreadful bruise. Come now, lie down and rest here. I must go out and buy some things; I haven't anything to wear. Let me see, it's four o'clock now; I'll be back by six at latest. Then you can take me out to dinner."

She sat by him stroking his face until he fell asleep, then went quietly away.

Ivan had slept for an hour or more when Rubinin woke him. "Good, you're still here. I was afraid you had gone out with your little one. What a pretty piece she is! Plenty of nerve, too, to get you away from them like that. Now listen, boy, I have something to tell you. We've decided to send you back to the Front immediately. As a matter of fact I'm afraid you can't leave for a day or two, as there's such confusion that we can't exactly locate the outfit you're to join. The news is even better than we thought, the Germans have retaken Galicz and Kalisz and are advancing all along the line."

Ivan stared at him, rubbing his eyes. "What's that," he said, still half asleep, "they've retaken Galicz?"

"Yes, indeed, and the Russian troops are said to be demoralized. We have a copy of the German official communiqué. This is our opportunity, without doubt. You won't be the only one—we're sending every available man. You were grumbling last week about inaction, and how tired you were of that château, but now you'll have work to do, and plenty. Get the boys back from the Front and send them to sack the châteaux. After this licking they'll listen to our 'Stop the War' slogan. Your job is to hurry the disintegration. 'Peace and Land,' that's your story. Tell them the estates are already being divided, and what damn fools they are to stay at the Front when their friends

at home are getting the richest fields and the fattest cattle. They'll understand that, won't they?"

"Of course they'll understand," said Ivan hotly, "I'll make them understand. I know how to talk to soldiers, and there's an estate I'd like to help divide myself." He rubbed his swollen forehead.

"You can pay that back later," grinned Rubinin, "but now get up and put your coat on because we have a meeting in fifteen minutes to discuss the organizational program for work at the Front."

Ivan stared at him, startled. But what of Nina? In the first moments of wakefulness he'd forgotten all about her. "Good God," he cried, "it's nearly half-past five. My friend, Nina Lvovna, said she'd be back at six."

"Oh, leave her a note," said Rubinin carelessly, "and tell her you'll be here at seven. The meeting won't take long as we've got most of the program cut and dried. Come on, we've no time to lose."

Ivan frowned. He wanted to remonstrate, but he couldn't find words. To wait here now would only set Rubinin against Nina, which was the last thing he wanted.

Without being fully aware of it, in that moment he was making the decision—Nina might stay with him as wife or comrade, but he could never go with her. He wrote a brief note saying that he was called away on important business but would be back as soon after half-past six as possible. "Please wait here for me,

darling," he ended, "or leave a message saying where to meet you."

Nevertheless it was seven-thirty before he knocked on the bedroom door. The meeting had been full of excitement: the breach in the Russian lines was widening every hour and the government in Petersburg was showing signs of panic. There were rumors of a popular movement in the capital, where thousands of workers were parading with banners, "Stop the War," and "All Power to the Soviets."

She must be asleep, he thought, and knocked again more loudly. There was no answer. He turned the handle and the door opened. It was unlocked and the room was empty. On the mantelpiece was a sheet of paper. He picked it up and read her message:

Since you prefer the society of your friends to mine, I've gone to the Savoy. At least I shall be more comfortable there than in this pigsty.—N.

But there was a postscript:

If you want to see me [she had scratched this out and continued] I want to see you. Meet me in the little garden in front of the Opera House at eight o'clock. Love.—NINA.

Ivan sat down on the bed with the paper in his hands. He stared at the message and wondered what to think of it. The first part was written in black bold letters. Clearly she had been furious to find him ab-

sent, and then thought better of it and added the postscript in smoother, more rounded writing. Ivan could not find it in his heart to blame her. He knew how young she was and how headstrong, the spoilt darling of her parents to whom nothing was ever denied. He looked at the frowsy room, the stains on the wall, the dirty bed linen and the rough basin and cracked pitcher on a bare wood table. No wonder she hated it—but she had sent him her love. His heart melted for her; she loved him and she'd saved his life. After all, love mattered most. If she loved him, as he knew she did, he could surely make her understand what he had to do. Eight o'clock she had said. He must hurry off at once.

Nina kept him waiting a few minutes, but her greeting was warm and friendly. "I hated to run away like that," she said, "but that place was really too terrible, and it was horrid of you, Vanusha, to go out when you had promised to wait for me—unless"—she paused and her cheeks grew pink—"your important business concerned us."

Ivan blinked for a second then caught her meaning. "I can get a marriage license tomorrow if you want it. The new law has made it easy. But today it was something else. I'm terribly sorry, Ninushka, and I don't wonder you found that place uncomfortable. For me it's different. Any sort of bed is like heaven after the trenches, but for you—"

"That's what Misha said when he first came home on leave. He wouldn't get up for two whole days, just

lay in bed and enjoyed it. You've never told me much about the war, Vanusha. You're still in the army, aren't you?—although they said you lied about the Cossack regiment."

"I'll tell you the whole story some day; it's rather interesting, although some of it you might not like."

"Oh, you can't shock me. I've heard the most dreadful things from Misha. Look, this is a nice little restaurant, let's eat here. It used to be German before and they called it New Bavaria, but now, of course, the name is changed and it has become New Moscow."

"I knew a place like that in Kharkov," said Ivan. "Before the War they called it Wiener Diele, but it was Café de Paris when I went there."

"Oh, I've heard of it," she said, as they sat down at a table in the corner, "Misha used to go there often. It was a very gay place, I gathered, and rather naughty, Vanusha."

"Yes," he said, "I found it was both, but I didn't stay there long, just part of one evening."

This, he felt, was dangerous ground, but at least it was neutral between the two of them, so he told her stories of the war and she listened to him, entranced. Suddenly she checked him and said seriously, "But, Vanusha, what about us? Are you coming home with me to the country?"

He'd been thinking about that, too, deep down in his mind, and hoped he had found an answer. "I can't," he said, "I must go back to the Front tomorrow,

or the next day, I really must. That was my important business today."

"Oh, how splendid!" she cried with glowing eyes. "Then you aren't a traitor, after all. I like it better this way. I wanted you to come with me, but if you go back to fight I'll be proud of you. And you'll take care of yourself, won't you, darling?" She took his hands in hers and raised them to her lips.

He looked into her eyes and knew that it was hopeless; he could not lie to her. "I'm going back to the Front to work for the Bolsheviks," he said slowly. "Don't you understand, Nina, that I am a revolutionary, the enemy of your class? Don't you know that now?"

"Do you mean," she said in a low voice, "that you are my enemy?"

"Of course not; you know that I love you, and I know that you love me."

"But you hate the things that I love and want to destroy them. You hate the people I love and want to kill them. Is that true?"

He nodded without a word.

"You can't do it, Vanusha." Her voice was toneless. "And I can't do it, either. No one can love and hate at the same time. If your love is stronger, you will come with me; but if hate rules your heart, you will lose me. I don't want you to lose me." This time her voice was shaking and she clasped his hands in passion.

He shook his head. "I can't do it," he said; "the

choice is not so simple as you think. If you knew what my life has been you might—”

She dropped his hands and stood up. “Is that your last word,” she said, “do you mean that you have made your choice?”

She waited, but Ivan said nothing.

“All right then,” she blazed at him, “I’ll go home by the midnight train, and I tell you, Vanusha, I hate you, and don’t you ever dare to speak to me again.” Without another word she slipped past him and ran out of the restaurant.

It is hard to be twenty and in love and to lose the darling of your heart’s desire. In later life a man cares less; there may have been many losses and many darlings. A man acquires a philosophy of love which in its crudest form can be stated as “There are better fish in the sea than ever came out of it.” But at twenty one feels differently. The light has gone from the sky and the world is desolate because She is no longer here. She is my light in the sky and without her I am dark and desolate. So Ivan felt as he trudged back to the hotel near the Kursk Station. He was flat and empty and downcast by a sense of failure. He thought that he might have mastered Nina, but he hadn’t known how to do it. She might have mastered him, but he wouldn’t let her, and the result was nothing. They both were sad and lonely, to no purpose. The result was nothing. He stumbled upstairs and lay on the bed without undressing. If she had loved him, she

would have stayed with him, but she would not stay. And yet he knew she loved him. If he loved her he would have followed her, but he could not go, and yet he knew he loved her. There was nothing to be done.

All night he lay there thinking, unable to sleep. He missed Nina so much and longed for her so terribly that the loss of her seemed to have torn something away from his body which hurt him like physical pain. He ached with longing for her, and his mind was pierced by daggers of fear for her safety. Supposing the peasants attacked her father's house and killed her? She had saved his life, but he could do nothing to save hers. She was gone from him, he had lost her.

He got up and crossed the corridor to Rubinin's room. "Have you any news for me?" he asked. "I can't sleep, and have you any vodka?"

Rubinin fumbled among his papers. "Yes," he said, "I have your pass for the Front here; we got it quicker than I thought. Isn't your girl there?"

"She went home," said Ivan. "She didn't like it here."

"Never mind about girls," said Rubinin. "Of course she wouldn't like it, though she's a pretty one and I envy you. But now there's work to do—you can think about girls later."

"Give me work," said Ivan, "that's what I want. I'm tired of girls, I hate them all. They only cause trouble or make a man unhappy. Give me work, that's what I want. To hell with girls! I won't think of girls again, I'll think of the revolution. Girls are like a drug

to make life soft and easy, but I want work. I want to fight and work."

Rubinin smiled. "If you wanted her you were wrong to let her go. That was your fault. But it doesn't matter because you have to go yourself. Go now to the Front—the train leaves at noon—and work your head off. The Front will decide the issue and the army is ready to hear you."

Ivan looked at him with new light in his eyes. He felt suddenly alive again, instead of dazed. The room and the things in it were clear; he could see them and distinguish them. Rubinin too was real and life was real before him. The revolution was real and he was a revolutionary; there was something he could do.

He poured a full glass of vodka and drank it at one gulp. "Did you ever love a girl," he asked, "and lose her? And if so, what did you do about it?"

Rubinin frowned. "It happened once," he said shortly, "but she died."

He put his hand on Ivan's arm. "Don't take it so hard, young comrade," he said kindly. "I know how you feel, but you needn't take it so hard. I know there are barriers between you and your sweetheart, but barriers are there to be broken. There is only one barrier none of us can break, and that is death."

Ivan felt ashamed. "Perhaps you're right," he said slowly. "I am young and greedy and think too much of myself. I will try to forget myself and my own unhappiness. Where do you want me to go?"

"The Southern Front, somewhere east of Galicz,

since the Germans have taken it. Here are your papers and I have a uniform in my room. Again the name is Ivan—that's a coincidence: Ivan Sergeyich Zubov, in the Second Siberian Rifles, Eleventh Army. In theory you're a new recruit just called up. Zubov, who is one of us, only got the paper three days ago—he's just your age. So be careful at first not to seem to know too much about it, but that won't matter—the disintegration is so great already. You know this offensive would never have happened at all if they hadn't persuaded the army that the Germans had moved their troops to France, and that one more push would end the war. Actually it's the opposite, they still have half a million men or more, as their counterattack has shown. When you join your company, get in touch immediately with Comrade Grubenko; he's a sergeant and a member of the Eleventh Army Committee; he'll tell you what to do."

The train was crowded but there weren't many soldiers on it. Ivan made friends with a rifleman, a corporal in another Siberian regiment. "What!" the corporal said in surprise, "you're going out because they called you up? Why didn't you lay low, you damned fool? The Front's no place for youngsters anyway, and they'd never catch you if you lay low."

"Then why are you going?" asked Ivan.

The other looked at him. "For a personal reason," he said coldly. "You don't know the army, young fellow—what it used to be like, I mean. There's a

major in my battalion who took a shot at me because I had ducked into a shell hole during an attack, and he said I was shirking, the bastard. Look here"—and he held out his left arm, drew his sleeve back, and showed a grooved scar from wrist to elbow. "It cut the nerve," he said, "I can't use this hand properly, but I can use the other one. I've waited a long while for that sookin sin. He shot me in 'fourteen, the second month of the War, in Poland. The only thing I was afraid of was that the Germans might kill him first, but they didn't. He's my meat, I tell you: that's why I'm going back to the Front."

He spoke openly, in a loud voice, and to Ivan's surprise no one in the compartment seemed to think there was anything strange in what he said. They laughed, and a man in the corner, dressed like a peasant, cried out, "That's the stuff, boy, pay him back the bullet; but shoot straighter than he did. Give it to him between the eyes instead of in the forearm."

"You bet I will," said the corporal, "unless it's a wet day, then I'll let him have it in the belly, so's he'll die slower. My arm aches like hell in rainy weather."

Grubenko was a dour Ukrainian with a square head, thick features, and eyes that were hard as flint, a man of forty, bitter and vengeful, trained by life to tune with Ivan's mood. He and Ivan talked long the first night they met, talked all night through in a pup tent in the forest.

"Never mind about that," Grubenko said, when

Ivan showed doubts about knowing too much of the army for a raw recruit. "Just go straight ahead and if anybody questions you, smack him on the nose. That is your answer"—he pointed to the band of red ribbon on Ivan's arm. "Even the officers wear it now, God damn their souls, and they walk softly, believe my word.

"This was supposed to be a 'loyal' regiment, but do you know what happened, exactly one week ago? On the other side of Galicz we'd found by that time that there were still some Germans left in Russia. It had been easy before and a lot of our fellows believed what they'd been told, that all the German troops had been taken back to France. Then we came to an entrenched position; you could see the barbed wire glinting in the sun, all bright and new, and the German planes overhead with their black crosses and their guns banging—you know the stuff. That made the boys think a little.

"And listen"—he smacked his knee excitedly—"we didn't even have to hold a meeting; we weren't going to attack—we'd had enough of that. The zero hour was six A.M. and there was a bombardment from our side. Why not?—the gunners didn't care—they were three miles behind.

"Some of our people got mad because the Germans were shelling us in return, and wanted to go back and tell the gunners to stop it, but it had been raining and three miles is a long hike through the mud. All right then, as I'm telling you, at six they blew the whistles

and the officers shouted, 'Come on, men, come on and finish the war, and chase these dogs of Germans off our Russian soil.'

"Do you think anyone moved? You bet they didn't. We lay quiet. We hadn't trenches, just the little fox-hole thing you scoop out yourself against machine-gun fire—we lay there and laughed at them.

"Then the colonel stood up and yelled at us, 'You cowardly sons of bitches, have you no heart to fight for your country?' and I yelled back, 'Whose country, the country of the bosses or the country of the peasants and workers? Go on and fight for it yourself, if you're so eager.'

"I tell you, boy, the old man had guts; he swung round and loosed off his gun at me, and by God I was glad I'd got that fox hole. I ducked quick but the bullet clipped my cap. He was a big fellow, this colonel, strong as a bull and a good soldier, I'll say that for him, and what's more he treated us right. In this battalion, I tell you, if the men were short of food, the officers were short, too—the colonel saw to that. Give the devil his due, I say; the man was a real soldier.

"He stood there alone and shouted back at me, 'I hope I killed you, you cowardly bastard, but whether I did or not, I'll accept your challenge.' He swung round and set off at a slow trot towards the German lines, all alone mind you—not even the officers dared to follow. He charged the German lines alone.

"Of course, he was against us, I know, but you've got to give him credit. He didn't wear any red stripe

around his arm—not that one, no indeed. He was a brave man, and strong as a bull, as I've told you. He ran alone and they let him come. Perhaps they thought he was crazy or just didn't know what it meant.

"Then they gave him a burst of fire, only a few rounds, probably some youngster with a new machine gun. That cut him down, of course, and you may not think it, but I myself felt sick to see him fall, not more than a hundred feet from the German line.

"Say what you like about those Germans, they've got respect for courage. Do you know they gave that man a military funeral? They had their band out playing the death march and 'God Save the Czar,'—that, of course, was to annoy us. And they fired three volleys over his grave and cheered to beat the band. They're strong people, the Germans, and the colonel was a strong man, too."

He rubbed his cheek reflectively. "I don't know why I'm telling you this, because it's not our side of the story, Lord knows, but I assure you, comrade, that I felt sore when I heard those Germans cheering for our dead colonel. Damn it, the man was brave."

Ivan liked him; this was a man he could trust and work with. "Well, Comrade Grubenko, what have I got to do? I know what, but I don't know how."

"It's like this. We have a meeting of the soldiers' council every night—they can't stop us any more—so tonight I'll introduce you and I'll say you're not so young as you look and that you know something about the war. No, I'll say more than that. I'll tell them you

were working in a factory in Moscow. But you were born in a village, weren't you?"

"Yes," said Ivan.

"That's fine; you can give them the whole triangle: peasants, workers, and soldiers."

"Don't the officers try to stop it?" asked Ivan. "I happen to know, Comrade Grubenko, that there is a counterrevolutionary movement, and it's real enough; in fact, it nearly killed me, so I know."

"Not here, they don't, not since the offensive failed. You'll talk to three thousand men tonight, and no one will try to stop you. Of course, someone might take a shot at you. There's always that risk, but it's most unlikely."

So Ivan talked to them, told them what the workers felt in Moscow, told them of the estates and the fat cattle that were waiting to be seized, told them how silly it was to stay here and be shot by the Germans, that no offensive could end the war. Why should they stay and be shot for the sake of the French and British? Why didn't they go home and seize the land? That was the way to end the war.

They cheered him madly; he was giving them what they wanted. He repeated Grubenko's story about the colonel, and added savagely, "A brave man, but a damned fool. He thinks we Russians are sheep. We used to be sheep, but we shall be sheep no longer; that's what our Party, the Party, the Bolsheviki, will do for you. We shall give you manhood; we shall make you men, not sheep, if only you have the nerve to

follow us. Stand up and be men. You have numbers and strength and courage—why kneel and kiss the hands of your masters? Let us take these masters and break them and seize their land and their cattle and their glittering houses. We are the people. We are stronger than they; let us take and break them. Go to your homes, I tell you; why stay here like sheep, obeying orders? Go to your homes and take the land and the golden furniture and the fat cattle. And kill them if they try to stop you, they or their flunkies, kill them dead in their big fine houses and take what they have, because we are the people and it is our sweat and blood and toil that have made their wealth. Take it back, I tell you, and learn to be men, not sheep.”

Night after night he talked with savage fury. There was a power in him, driving him, giving him the words to reach them, the words to fire their hearts and make them seize and kill. Night after night he drove them, and they obeyed his words. Ivan forgot fatigue, forgot himself, forgot everything save his message. He stormed up and down the Front telling them, making them hear and follow what he said. All the Bolsheviks were now aflame; there were hundreds of Ivans and Grubenkos telling these peasant soldiers what they must do—to seize the land and cattle, and be men.

The soldiers heard what they told them, and believed it and went home. They were ignorant and backward, sheep folk, wage slaves, men’s slaves, landlords’ slaves, but they were the people and they were many.

And at last, at such long last, they had leadership: the Bolsheviks were leading them, showing them what to do, telling them how to do it, giving them leadership, giving light to these dark ones, putting fire in their hearts and stiffness in their backs.

As the weeks passed, the Bolsheviks' task grew easier. There was a setback in July, when the Front learned of the failure in Petersburg. A blow had been struck too soon and had been crushed by the hostile forces; the Bolshevik leaders were in flight or prison. Instead of stopping them, that drove them to new efforts. Why was July a failure? Because the others, the enemy, the bosses, the government, still had arms, still had men to fight for them—the loyalists and the Cossacks and gendarmes, the ones that took money from France and England, the yellow rats. Each soldier that left the Front was a fighter for the Bolsheviks. They redoubled their efforts, they made each one see that worker or peasant his cause was theirs, that he must go back to his village and take the land and fight the gendarmes and the Cossacks: the Bolsheviks had found the answer—land for the peasants, peace, and all power for the workers, the rule of the proletariat, the control of all of it in the people's hands. That was what they told them, and they heard it and believed it. They held them in their hands, at the great mass meetings, five thousand at a time; they led and the masses followed; they were winning and they knew it. They were breaking the ice of centuries; the flood was bound to come.



CHAPTER XIX

THE MADDENING THING was ignorance and lack of news. Was it Petersburg or Moscow or the Front that would decide the issue? What was happening anyway? What were they doing, the peasant soldiers, when they left the Front and went home to their villages? Ivan wanted to know, but he couldn't find out; he kept asking Grubenko and the others, but they didn't seem to know either.

Then one day Grubenko said to him, "I think you're right; we ought to know what happens when they go home. Now I have a letter here—do you remember those two men from the village near Poltava in the Ukraine, the tall thin one and the little fat one, always together? The tall one learned to write a year ago in hospital, after he was wounded, and he says they seized the village estate and killed the owner—she was an elderly woman—but that there was a great deal of confusion and squabbling about dividing up the land and stocks and tools. He wants us to help him, and I think it would be a good idea for you to go down there and see about it. You'd kill two birds with one stone that way; first of all, you'd straighten out their affair,

and secondly, you could make an interesting report on how things really are in the village. There's a train tonight for Kharkov, but I don't know how you'll get from there to Poltava."

"Oh, I'll manage that," said Ivan. "I think it's a good idea."

The two deserters—Stefan, the tall one, and Pavel, the little fat one—came to meet him at the station, and drove him five miles across the muddy steppe in a long Ukrainian cart, which rattled and jolted. "We're very glad you've come, Comrade Ivan," they said. "Perhaps you can help us. Everyone in the village is crazy. It's not a large village, only two hundred houses, say a thousand souls; but they're all crazy. We don't like it. There was too much killing and we think it was our fault—we started it. We did what you told us, we came back here with our rifles, and there were eight other soldiers who had come before us. We called a meeting in the school. The peasant committee tried to stop it—they are Social Revolutionaries who support the government and want to go on with the war. That was how it all began." They paused and looked at him.

"What do you mean?" said Ivan. "I don't understand."

Stefan scratched the reddish stubble on his chin. "The president of the committee tried to stop us—he didn't want us to have a meeting. He was my uncle, Mikhail Mikhailovich. He said, 'You're just a child

and don't know anything; you're hotheaded and silly, you young ones; you don't know what you're doing. You come here talking nonsense and making trouble. Go back to the Front where you belong. If you stay here, one of these days they will send police for you and we'll all be beaten, as it was in nineteen hundred and six. You young ones don't know anything, but I remember.'

"That made me angry, so I stabbed him with my bayonet, in the throat. His eyes were funny—only the whites were showing. He tried to speak, but he couldn't; then he died. We killed the rest of them, all six of the committee, and held our meeting. We didn't talk long. We knew what we wanted.

"There were fifteen of us altogether, eight soldiers and seven other boys.

"We knew what we wanted. It was evening about nine o'clock, a wet night, but not cold. We took torches and went up to the big house with our torches; we beat with the butts of our rifles on the door. The door was locked, but Pavel fired his rifle at the keyhole, and we broke in. The butler tried to stop us; he called us blackguards and said we'd all be beaten, so we killed him and threw him in the fireplace. We made a pile of the furniture in the hall, broke it all to pieces, and set fire to it. Then we went upstairs looking for the old lady. All the servants had run away—there was no one in the house but the old lady.

"She was strong and brave; she had a little pistol

with a silver handle, and she fired at one of the boys and hit him between the eyes. That was funny, he looked so stupid and surprised, just stood staring at her stupidly with a hole in his forehead between the eyes. Then he fell sideways, dead.

"The house was burning, so we had to hurry. Two of us took the old woman out—it's quite close here now, I'll show you—and the rest all ran to the wine cellar. We got hundreds of bottles, red wine and yellow, and took them out into the garden. We took food from the kitchen, meat and sausage and white bread.

"We buried the old lady among the roses, right up to her neck, so that only her head was showing. She kicked and yelled, but we held her fast and buried her until nothing but her neck was showing.

"Look, it's right here, there's what's left of the old witch." He hauled on the reins and stopped the cart and pointed.

Not four yards away Ivan saw it in the moonlight, and his blood went cold in horror. That dreadful battered face, cut and torn into nothing human, the gray hair clotted brown with blood. Was this what they had done? And done it at his bidding. Was this what revolution meant, was this the revenge of which he'd dreamt?

They sat drinking, they told him, and as they finished each bottle they had thrown it at the target. She screamed once, they said, a high thin scream like a wounded hare, and then she was silent. Afterwards

they fought among themselves and three of them were killed.

Ivan couldn't move; he felt as if his hands and feet were powerless, as if his body were frozen. "How could you do it?" he gasped. "Why not kill her straight and get through with it? Why act like that?"

The tall one, Stefan, laughed at him. "She had it coming to her, and worse than that. After all, she died quick and easy, but she should have died slow and hard.

"There were two boys in this village six years ago—one was my best friend. They worked for her as grooms in the stables—she had many horses. There was a big black stallion from England, Jupiter they called him, a splendid horse, with eyes of fire and the temper of a devil. They were all afraid of him; he'd killed four men already, torn them to pieces and battered them with his hoofs. One day my two friends had orders to take him out for exercise, but they were frightened. They didn't dare to approach him, were afraid to go into his box.

"The Countess heard of it and it made her angry. She had the two of them, my friend and the other one, thrown into the stallion's loose-box—yes, there were men to obey her orders—then she beat him to frenzy with a switch. They died slowly, those two, my friend and his comrade, and their cries were awful. So we paid her back in kind, and here's what's left of her."

"Enough," said Ivan harshly, "I've heard enough of it. Now you take my orders. Tomorrow bring earth

and make a mound over this, and hide it. Come now, and call your comrades. We shall hold a meeting and I will tell you what to do, and you shall do it."

They followed him meekly, and his heart was sick. What had Druzak said, "The poor dark people of Russia, the sheep-wolves, savage and leaderless." What horror this was, that men could act like wolves!

It was bad that night at the meeting, and Ivan didn't like it. Fear and hate are evil companions for men and women, and unwise counselors, but hysteria is worse than either. These people were hysterical as well as hateful and frightened. They had killed first for revenge, but later for lust of killing, the Countess and the peasant committee, and the priest and his two deacons, and the innkeeper and his wife and family.

There were a hundred and fifty of them in the schoolroom, pressed together like animals, watching him with savage eyes. When he lashed them with words they growled at him, and for the first time in his life he felt the chill of terror. Then passion caught him and he forgot himself in thinking of his cause. Loud and bold he said what they must do, how to divide the land and stock, how shape themselves for self-government, to order their lives in freedom. As he spoke their faces grew brighter and the shadow and torment vanished from their eyes. This, he felt, was life and the justification of himself, to bring light to these dark ones and give them strength and manhood, to spend himself for them.

He slept that night exhausted, but somehow hap-

pier than he had been since the loss of Nina. If he could not help himself, it had helped him to help others.

Grubenko frowned when he heard Ivan's story a few days later. "Yes," he said, "that's bad, but it has to happen. The wind has been sown and the whirlwind must be reaped. But is it our fault that men behave like beasts? Who made beasts of them, who held them down in dirt and ignorance for centuries? They are the ones to blame and they deserve to pay. It is bad, though, I admit it, and we shall have trouble later with these peasants; it is easier to rouse them to madness than to hold them in sane control. That must come later; we have to destroy before we can begin to build." He brushed his hand across his forehead, as if rubbing off a thought he didn't like.

"Look here," he said brusquely, "there is news from Petersburg; the hour is very near. I will read you the message I received this morning; it is dated October fifteenth:

The food situation has become deplorable in Petersburg, Moscow and other large cities. Only a half a pound of bread per day is being issued on the food cards and that is rarely available. There is little meat in the markets and everyone says the cities will starve this winter unless something is done about it.

Grubenko interrupted himself. "As you know, comrade, rations here at the Front are much smaller and

worse in quality than before, despite the reduction in army numbers by desertion." He resumed his reading:

The Bolshevik members of the Council of the Republic have just withdrawn from that body. It is simply a question of days before we take action. Everywhere we are gaining power. As early as August in the Moscow one-day strike we brought out half a million workers and today we have fifty per cent not only of the soviets but of the Dumas and other city councils. On the eighteenth of October our list had four hundred and fifty votes in the Petrograd Soviet, while the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks only had two hundred between them. Our slogan "All power to the soviets" is almost an accomplished fact, and now we Bolsheviks control the Soviets. A Committee of Revolutionary Defense has been formed in Petersburg.

"Our work here is done, comrade. We must go at once to Moscow."

It was strange, the difference between the two revolutions, February and October, in the two great cities, Petersburg and Moscow. In February a thousand or more were killed in Petersburg, but in Moscow hardly a drop of blood was shed. Like the rest of Russia it followed the lead of the capital, and once the czarist regime was overthrown in Petersburg there was no more fighting elsewhere.

In October, on the other hand, the Bolsheviks in Petersburg won almost without a struggle. There was some confusion and scuffling round the Winter Palace

and a score or so of shells burst harmlessly, but the stories of massacre, of the Women's Battalion being raped and killed, of *Junkers* and Knights of St. George shot dead, were lies. The Bolsheviks did not seize power from Kerensky; they picked up from the gutter a scepter which had dropped from his nerveless fingers.

In Moscow, however, it was different. When Grubenko and Ivan reached the city on the twenty-ninth of October, they found the Kremlin strongly held by counterrevolutionary officers, with the support of a thousand students from the Military Academy.

The outskirts of the city were mostly in the hands of the workers, although the latter were badly armed, but reactionaries were occupying some large houses near the Nikitsky Gate, at the end of the Tverskoi Boulevard. They were well supplied with machine guns, and each Bolshevik attempt to rush the open space and fire or dynamite the houses was checked by a hail of bullets. If the defenders of the Kremlin had dared a sortie at that moment reaction might have triumphed, but they feared to leave the shelter of the Kremlin walls.

Three days more the struggle raged, without decision. Then it was known that an artillery battalion had been summoned to Moscow to suppress the revolution and was encamped on the Khodinka Field on the northern edge of the city. Their intervention, it seemed, would settle things. They were reported loyal to the Government, but the Bolsheviks were desperate. They couldn't wait.

Ivan rode with a score of others in two big lorries out through the Triumphal Arch past the Baltic Station to the Khodinka Field. The gunners let them come; at least that was something gained—they had not been met with a volley. The cannon were lined up in two rows on the snow-flecked grass, French seventy-fives in front and the six-inch guns behind. Their crews stood orderly, each crew beside its gun, ominous and ready.

A colonel came running to meet the group of Bolsheviks as they stumbled through the slush. "Get back there, damn you," he cried, "I shall kill the first man who moves beyond this line"—he drew a mark with his foot across the grass. One of the Bolsheviks shot from the hip without waiting and the colonel fell to the ground, beating his hands and feet on the mark that he had drawn.

Utter silence followed. Both sides stood so still and silent that the kicks and gurgles of the dying man sounded loud and terrible. Then the Red who had shot him threw down his smoking pistol and ran forward, hands upraised. "Brothers," he shouted, "we are brothers. You cannot kill your brothers."

The Bolsheviks plunged after him, running awkwardly with lifted arms. In a moment they had passed the first row of slender guns and were merged in the gunners' ranks, catching hold of them, pleading with the men to listen. Words are weaker than deeds, but there are times when words are deeds, when words have power and life, when words are fire and action.

They talked and the soldiers listened, letting them talk, refusing to obey the officers who tried to stop them. The soldiers listened to the Bolshevik talk, and it swayed them; they were moved by the words that rang like hammers on an anvil, each word a hammer stroke, driving them to action. There were more than five hundred soldiers and only twenty Bolsheviks, but the latter were the strongest.

The soldiers began shouting, waving their caps for the revolution, carrying the Bolsheviks on their shoulders, cheering for the revolution.

Then the guns roared and the fight for Moscow ended. A few heavy shells exploded in the Kremlin, some more in the river, and a dozen salvos upon the White stronghold on the Tverskaya. That was all.

A white flag flew from the Kremlin tower, and the great building that the Whites had held near the Nikitsky Gate was a fortress no longer, but a holocaust of flame.

What use now machine guns on the roofs and balconies?

Leave behind your machine gun, White Guard, run quick for the staircase. If you run quick, there still is time. Run quick, there is *no* time, the mounting flames have trapped you. Run back to your balcony or roof, fire another burst from your machine gun, then jump to destruction, to escape the hungry flame.

Some jumped and died quickly, others fell screaming into the furnace. Their fortress was a bonfire and the Kremlin had surrendered.

The next few days were delirium for the Bolsheviki—meetings, speeches, orders, action, rushing here and there, doing this and that, organizing, sending messages, receiving messages, requisitioning unoccupied houses for people to live in, work without surcease until their heads reeled and they fell asleep at their desks. Then they woke with a shock to reality, saw how little they had really done, how much remained to do.

It struck Ivan first in his own shop in the factory where he had worked and which he represented on the Moscow Soviet. He received an urgent message from Klishko, now secretary of the factory cell.

"Come out here and talk to the boys," he said. "Things are going wrong; don't wait, come at once. We don't know what to do."

The gates of the plant were open, but there was no smoke from any of the chimneys, no bustle of work, no clatter of machines. In the shell-turning shop men were standing idly in groups; they looked sullen and discontented.

"What's this you've done?" one shouted to Ivan. "We've made the revolution you talked about and the workers have power. But what's the good of it?"

"Yes," cried another, "we've got power, but we want jobs. Where are our jobs? And wages and food? Who'll pay our wages now, and where will the food come from? You try and buy it in the market; there's nothing to be had for love or money."

They were all shouting at once, but they did not seem angry or threatening. Their mood was bewildered.

ment, as if they could not understand what was happening.

Nevertheless, the truth was plain—there were no orders for the plant, no raw materials, no bosses or bookkeepers, no money. Ivan made a short speech telling them that the factory was now theirs, that if the owners and white-collar men attempted sabotage the plant would be taken over and run without them. He promised them work and food. All workers, he said, had a right to both; let them be patient for a day or two and everything would be all right. Then he rushed away to Party headquarters.

They gave him small comfort. "I know, comrade, it's the same story all over the city—this damned sabotage. It's the railways that are to blame." Others joined in a chorus, each giving a different reason—sabotage, transportation, no raw materials, the peasants, the Kadets and Junkers.

"But what shall I do?" he cried. "These men have to eat whether they work or not."

That indeed was the problem, and they solved it as best they could in the weeks and months that followed. Somehow transport was organized; they sent out goods to the villages and bartered them for food. They ransacked the depots and requisitioned stores. The workers were registered, whether they had jobs or not, and given food by cards, not plenty, but enough to live on.

Meanwhile they suppressed looting and established a semblance of order. Red Guards combed the city for

hidden arms, and the hordes of deserters from the Front were sent home to their villages.

Groups of volunteers went out each week to cut wood, and later in the spring to plow and sow the ground. The peasants were sullen now, hiding their food, burying it, refusing to give it up to the collecting parties, who no longer had goods to offer in exchange. What could the peasants do with worthless paper money? And why, they asked, didn't the Bolsheviks give them a document of ownership to the land, as they had promised?

Late in February Ivan was given a district between Serpukov and Orel, where it was his duty not only to obtain grain at all costs from the peasants, but to drive, urge, force, persuade them to plow and sow the land for the coming harvest. He learned how to talk to them, and soon understood that their thoughts ran chiefly along two lines; first, that they wanted some document of fixed authority to establish outright ownership to land, whether they had received it by lot from the village holdings or seized it lately from their landlords.

That was their first desire. The second was to give nothing unless they received something in return.

At each village he came to they asked him the same question, "Why should we give food to the cities when the cities send us nothing? There is no soap or salt or kerosene or cotton cloth, none of the things we need, and yet you take our food because you say you need it."

How talk to these simple folk, how make them understand the confusion and the sabotage, the failure of transport, and the breakdown of normal life?

As the weeks passed Ivan grew gaunt and stern; he ordered instead of pleading and took instead of asking.

It was the same throughout the country—industry was stagnant, transportation barely moving. It seemed that each man thought only of himself and fought for himself alone. The enthusiasm of six months before had given way to dullness. "You told us," the peasants said, "to take the land and drive away the landlords. We did it. Now let us alone—we do not care for you and your cities. Either bring us tools and kerosene and salt or leave us alone."

Endlessly the villages voiced the same refrain. There was little revolt as yet or attempt at armed resistance, no more than surly looks or a shot in the night from behind a hedge.

The Bolsheviks ransacked the depots and gutted the cellars of big stores and houses in the towns. They bartered goods for food and used tools and kerosene and salt to bribe the peasants to plow and sow the land. They gave little—there was not much to give—but they promised more. They sent gangs of volunteer workers into the villages to shame the peasants by example. They cajoled and threatened and did not hesitate to strike if need arose. Somehow the land was sown, somehow enough grain and meat and vegetables came trickling into the cities to keep the revolution

alive, but the peasants grew daily more hostile with each week that passed.

They made peace with Germany at the point of a bayonet, and it brought them no advantage. All it meant was that the granaries of the Ukraine passed into the hands of the enemy and that the Allied Powers became convinced that the Bolsheviki had sold them out. The Germans advanced along the coast to the gates of Petersburg, and the Soviet government was forced to flee to Moscow, which only made confusion worse. The German armies were winning in France, so it seemed, and in the surge of victory the German people forgot the sufferings of hunger and blockade.

Meanwhile the situation inside Russia grew uglier and more difficult. The peasants were revolting, the Czechoslovak legions on the Volga had come out against the Bolsheviki, and in the east and south the forces of counterrevolution grew stronger and more daring every day.



CHAPTER XX

IVAN STAYED at the Metropole Hotel on the Theater Square, which was now reserved for members of the city soviet. It had been luxurious and expensive, but the gilded furniture was scarred, and the red plush curtains were torn. There was a mattress on the bed but no sheets or blankets, and the food downstairs was meager and ill served.

Ivan sat alone on the night of his arrival, reading a newspaper. Were the Germans winning or losing in the west? They had struck deep into the Allied lines but seemed unable to push their victory home. It looked startling on the smudgy map. From the Aisne to the Marne in seven days—surely they could now strike straight at Paris and win the war outright. In that case what would happen? Would they sweep back on Russia and drown its revolution in blood?

A knock at the door roused him; he rose wearily and opened it. Druzak stood there smiling, then came forward and held him by the shoulders and looked long into his face. "So we meet again, young comrade of the wolfskins. You remember, I said we should meet again."

"You've changed a lot," he said, "you're bigger and stronger, but your face is thin and you seem tired. I've brought this"—he unwrapped a paper package. "Here is good red Burgundy and white bread and a cold chicken. Let's eat and drink and then we can talk." His voice was strong and his eyes were young as ever, but the lines around his mouth had deepened, and his lame leg dragged as he shuffled to a chair.

"I am tired, too," he said, as he cut the bread and the chicken, "so open a bottle quick and ask the Rhône sun to put new vigor in our bodies. It was hard enough to make a revolution, but to hold it up and carry it along is heavier than we thought."

Ivan gulped the rich wine, which warmed him and made him hungry. "I know that," he agreed. "After months of work in the villages—those damned peasants, they treat us as enemies, not as friends. Can't they understand what we have done for them and what we want to do?"

"Why should they?" asked Druzak simply. "Or did you tell them?"

"We tried to, but they wouldn't listen. They heard us well enough when it was a question of seizing the land and throwing out the landlords. There was one village where they all went crazy; it was horrible." In vivid phrases he described that night of hysteria and the grisly head of the old countess. "It made me sick, I tell you," he ended hotly, "that men should act like that, and what's worse they did it at my orders, or by my advice."

Druzak shrugged his shoulders. "Who made them brutes? It was the landlords' fault, and now they have to pay. Of course the peasants have much to learn, and one day we shall teach them, but what matters now is: will they give us food? Our enemies are getting bolder and there will be civil war in Russia before the summer is ended. Where will the peasants stand when the fight begins?"

For an hour they discussed the problem. Druzak knew more than Ivan and saw a wider picture, but he needed Ivan's first-hand knowledge of the villages and of what the peasants thought and said, and how they lived and acted.

"It's simple enough," he said at last, "and we have to face the facts. We told the peasants to seize the land, but then we began to take from them what the land produced and gave them little or nothing in return. Of course they hated that, and blamed us for it. But the cities must be fed, and soon, I tell you, we shall have to feed an army. Unless I judge it wrong, the White Guards will find support against us in the villages at first. They might win if they were clever because this is a peasant country where transport is bad and the towns are far apart. But the Whites will seize food, too. And where they're successful they'll try to restore the landlords; the peasants won't have that, I'm wholly sure. They may swing from us for a time, but they'll swing back again, the Whites will drive them back, but it won't be quick or easy. That's why we need an army; that's why I sent you to the Front to

learn the soldier's trade. Now the time has come to apply and use what you have learned."

Ivan looked at him, hesitating. "I'm glad of that," he said at last. "I want action, I want"—again he paused. "May I ask you something, Comrade Druzak, may I speak to you freely?"

"I had hoped that you would," said the older man, "you see, I have heard—"

So Ivan told him about Nina, the whole story from the childhood days when she was a princess and he was a beggar boy until the night she stormed away from him in the New Bavaria. "What could I do?" he pleaded. "I love her but I won't be led by her, and she loves me but not enough to follow me. There is nothing I can do."

His voice was harsh with despair. Love is often folly and sometimes madness, but its power over youth is strong and cruel.

Druzak kneaded his chin between his thumb and fingers without answering. "Do you miss her very much?" he said at last.

Ivan nodded. "And don't forget she saved my life from her White-Guard friends."

"That was impulsive. She saved you because she loved you, but it did not mean that her mind was really changed or that she had come over to our side. Have you ever read Dostoevsky?"

"Oh, yes, at school, but that's old stuff. That's 'intellectual defeatism,' as Rubinin calls it. Things are different now, and—"

"You are silly," said Druzak, "you and Rubinin too. Dostoevsky knew his Russia and the Russian heart. In his book *The Idiot* there is a scene between the hero, Prince Myshkin, who of course was not an idiot at all, but whose heart was pure and simple beyond that of other men, and a scoundrel named Keller. Keller tells him that he had two thoughts at once, one honest thought to come and confess what a scoundrel he had been, and one cunning thought to use his honest confession as an excuse to borrow money. The prince replies, 'It is awfully difficult to struggle against these double thoughts. You were acting deceitfully to obtain my money by your tears, but you swear yourself that there was another motive too for your confession, an honorable motive as well as a mercenary one.' In these words lie the quintessence of human wisdom. I tell you, young friend, that not only are double motives most common but that a single motive is most rare."

"I don't understand," said Ivan. "What has this got to do with Nina and me?"

"I am trying to tell you. In Dostoevsky's novel the motives were honorable and deceitful simultaneously. In your case it is somewhat different, but the parallel is close. You have love for her and your devotion for our cause. She has love for you and an ingrained hatred of everything for which you work. These motives are contradictory, yet they are genuine in both of you."

"What can I do about it?" Ivan asked.

"There is nothing to be done; you are both the vic-

tims of circumstance. Something may occur to cancel the contradiction, but unless it occurs your joint problem must remain unsolved."

"Then there is nothing I can do? But I cannot change my heart. Druzak, I am so lonely without her. I've known other girls and thought I loved them, but not like this. They were something sweet and friendly, and I was happy with them, but when we parted I felt no sorrow or hollowness in my heart, as I feel now for Nina."

He was tired and his voice was faint, but Druzak looked at him without pity. "Don't talk sentimental nonsense," he said, "you're not a hero in a Dostoevsky novel, you're a soldier of the revolution, and in revolution there is no place for sentiment or sorrow or heart hollowness—no place at all for love, if you force me to speak frankly. You must understand, Ivan"—he pounded his fist on the table—"that you can't live in two worlds, not now in Russia today. Dostoevsky's heroes could but you can't. If this girl loved you enough to give up everything for you, her home and relatives, her position in life, and everything in thought and environment to which she has been accustomed—even then I would say that you must cast her aside and not think of her any more. But you say yourself she isn't willing to do that. All right, then let her go. Don't you understand what a revolution means? There is no longer any right of individual choice—you must be wholly for the revolution or against it, and if you have the slightest doubt or other thought apart from

the revolution, you become an enemy, a traitor."

"I don't understand," said Ivan indignantly. "Because I love this girl, does that mean that I'm disloyal?"

"If you love any girl it means that you're disloyal," said Druzak sternly. "The revolution is a mistress who allows no rival. You're young and hot-blooded, Ivan, and women are your weakness. But this is no time for weakness; any weakness will be fatal, whether it is fear or greed or love. You must have one motive only, one single motive, to serve the revolution. Now do you understand?"

Ivan nodded glumly. "Yes, I understand," he said, "but it's hard, this rule you give me."

"I know it's hard, when one is young. I, too, could tell you—but that was thirty years ago. I know it's easy to say, as they said to me, 'Forget her, you are worlds apart, forget her and that is all!' To say 'Forget' is easy, but forgetting itself is hard. When love burns deep you can't forget, but you can numb memory with work and action, and that's what you must do. Go off to the war and fight with a single motive, because, you see, there is something Dostoevsky never knew with all his genius, that in revolution there's no place for double motives. It must be all or nothing, hate or love, life or death."

Druzak acted promptly. Two days later Ivan was transferred from the Moscow Soviet to the Red Army with rank of company commander. His job was to

train recruits—elementary drill, rifle, machine-gun and grenade instruction. Some of them had seen service in the army, but most were young workers, ignorant of war.

They lived in tents on a field beside the river, without distinction between comrade commanders, as they were called, and the rank and file. They shared the same tents and ate the same food, which was better than Ivan had tasted for months. There was a real spirit of comradeship in the army and the trained men helped the others to learn quickly. Ivan worked furiously—drill and practice by day, theory and instruction in the evenings. As Druzak had said, his memories were drugged by work.

One hot evening Ivan sat on the riverbank relaxed and drowsy after swimming when Nadya put her hand upon his shoulder. "They told me I should find you here," she said. "Are you glad to see me?"

He jumped up and caught her in his arms. "Nadyuska, it's you, how splendid! It's ages since—but why are you dressed like this?" She wore a plain blue skirt and blouse, low-heeled shoes without stockings, a red band on her left arm and a red kerchief round her head.

"Don't you remember I told you that I wanted to join the Party. At first I did special work for Rubinin, but now I'm in the Red Cross, because everyone thinks we soon will have to fight, and I thought. . . ."

"Don't talk tonight about fighting. Tonight let's go to town and— Well, what's the matter?"—he turned

to a slim youngster in uniform: "Have you a message for me?"

"Oh, no, comrade commander," said the boy slowly, "but it's about this breechblock"—he dragged forward a light machine gun; "it's got jammed the way you said might happen sometimes, but I've forgotten how to fix it."

Ivan looked at Nadya laughing. "You see," he said, "that's my job now, morning, noon, and night. I can't get away from it. Look, comrade, it's like this. If it jams here, then you must knock this bolt and it opens so. You extract the faulty cartridge or whatever has jammed it, snap the bolt back again, and you're ready to go on firing. Go ahead, let's see you do it."

He made him do it twice, and then once more for good measure. "You've got to know beforehand," he said, "so's you can do it fast in action. They often jam like that, but if you know it right beforehand you can fix it quick."

He turned again to Nadya. "Come on," he said gaily, "let's go. I can get a sidecar. Have you still the same apartment?"

She looked at him strangely. "Can you leave your duty like this?"

"What do you mean? My duty's over for the night and I've not been in Moscow for a month. Only yesterday the battalion commander wondered why I never went there. As long as I'm back by six tomorrow morning it's all right. Come on, darling, what's the matter?"

She caught him by the arm and held him tight.

"Look at me, Vanusha, look me straight in the eyes and tell me do you love me."

"Of course I do, you silly girl. You know I love you."

He bent forward to kiss her, but she held her head back away from him. "No," she said, "no," and pushed her hand against his chin. "Not the way I mean you don't. I can see it in your eyes."

Ivan stared at her, bewildered. "What do you mean? I don't. . . ."

"Of course you don't, but I do. You never knew—you never cared—but I cared—and I can't bear it. I thought once you might—but you didn't—and now it's too late. Let me go," she cried passionately as he tried to hold her, "let me go, I tell you, I—"

"But Nadya, what's the matter? Don't be silly. We'll go to town together and have a good time, as we always did, and I can get back—"

"That's it," she cried, "you've said it—'Have a good time'—that's all you think of me. I don't want a good time with you. I want—oh, can't you see it?" She was sobbing now but she wouldn't let him soothe her. "No, no," she repeated, "it's no use. I won't listen, I must go away. At first I felt as you do—I wanted a good time and that was all—but now it's different. Don't you see," she ended desperately, "that now it's all or nothing, that I love you with all my heart? Do you love me like that?"

He tried to say yes, but he couldn't, and at last he understood. For a moment there was silence between

them, then Nadya murmured gently, "You see, Ivan, you do understand, at last." She took his cheeks between her hands and kissed him softly on the mouth. "Good-by," she said, "take care of yourself," and left him.

"Shall I run after her?" he wondered. "Poor kid, I never thought—but Druzak said—and yet if I—"

As he stood hesitating the young soldier touched his arm. "Excuse me, comrade commander," he said, "I had it right before, but when I went back to the tent to show the others it went wrong again. Was it this bolt or the other?"

Ivan bent down to the machine gun. "You knock it here," he said, patiently, "and it opens like this. Now do it ten times while I watch you."

Two days later the storm broke, swift and sudden as lightning. Three Social Revolutionaries killed the German Ambassador Von Mirbach in his embassy in Moscow, to set a sword of severance between Bolsheviks and Germans and to break the Peace of Brest-Litovsk.

Moscow blazed with excitement—the murder was planned by Savinkov, Kerensky's War Minister—the Social Revolutionaries had risen against the Bolsheviks—there were riots and fighting—the civil war had begun. At once the newly formed Cheka struck in reprisal, and the best troops of the Red Army were rushed in lorries to the center of Moscow.

Ivan's company was summoned by special order. As

they reached the post office a tall civilian stepped forward with hand upraised to halt them. He greeted Ivan briefly. "Read this," he said, "it's a mandate from the Extraordinary Commission [Che-ka] giving me full powers. You will obey my orders."

He wore civilian clothes but he spoke with authority, and his mandate bore the stamp of the Extraordinary Commission and the signature of its chief, Djerjinsky. Ivan saluted, "I hear and obey, comrade."

He used the old army answer, to his own surprise.

Once more he felt the inner warmth he had known in battles at the Front.

The Chekist spoke quickly. "Our people are combing the city for rebels, and we have located a group of them in a house down the boulevard here. You must liquidate them immediately. Every second is precious. Lenin insists that the wireless must report this evening to the Germans and to the whole world and to the people of Russia that the revolt is beaten. You must rush them without delay. They seem to be strongly entrenched, but you must break them quick."

Now Ivan knew what it meant to have behind him men who could use grenades and machine guns that didn't jam. Swiftly he flung his lines in open order down the boulevard and a side street. There was the rattle of rifle fire from the big square building on the corner, and a man fell here and there, but the rest were safe under shelter of the garden walls.

In hot haste he sent machine-gun platoons into the adjoining houses and ransacked them for ladders.

"Snap at them in bursts," he told the machine gunners. "You've got to keep their heads down while we storm the wall. Begin firing when you hear my whistle."

The tall Chekist was beside him. "You know your job, comrade. This is good."

"This is life," said Ivan, "or maybe death. Who cares?"

He barked orders to the men with ladders; then his whistle shrilled, and they rushed forward under the machine-gun barrage. They scaled the ten-foot wall and fell shouting into the garden. The defenders ran back to the house for cover, and the machine guns caught them as they ran. For an instant the machine guns lashed the ground-floor windows; then the fire lifted to let the attack go forward with grenades.

As the last explosion echoed they rushed on into a hell of fumes and blazing curtains and broken wood and glass and dead or dying men. The resistance was broken and they stormed up the wide stone staircase, hurling their grenades before them.

In a moment it was ended. Some of the defenders threw themselves from windows, the rest, a bare dozen, stood with arms raised in surrender. Most of them were wounded.

Ivan herded them downstairs and searched the house from cellar to garret. Like terriers after rats his men chased them out from cupboards and closets, from chests or from under beds. Thirty living prisoners they captured; there were eighty dead or dying. Ivan looked

at his watch; it was exactly nineteen minutes since the attack began.

"Thanks," said the Chekist, "we won't forget this. A splendid job." He was fumbling with a handkerchief at his forearm, grazed by a bullet.

"Wait," said Ivan, "let me look. No, you don't need a tourniquet, it's only a scratch. Let me tie the bandage. But what shall we do with this lot?"

"March them to the Kremlin"—the Chekist waved his thumb towards the prisoners—"march them to the Kremlin on foot between a column with fixed bayonets. We'll show these blasted Whites who is master of Moscow today."

Ivan formed his men in column. "Put our dead in a lorry," he ordered. There were only seven dead and sixteen wounded. Then he swung into line at the head of the column and gave orders, "Fix bayonets, forward march."

They spent that night in barracks in the city ready for further alarm, but the night passed quietly. The Moscow outbreak had been crushed, and all that now remained was to determine responsibility for the plot and inflict punishment. Early the next morning, however, came news of disturbances in other parts of the country. One of the gravest had occurred at Yaroslavl, four hundred miles northeast of Moscow, which was the important point where the Moscow line joined the Petersburg-Trans-Siberian.

The town was in the hands of the rebels and it was reported that Savinkov was in personal command and

that the troops there had joined the revolt. Ivan's detachment received orders to entrain immediately from the northern station, where the three other companies of their battalion would join them. He was to command the whole battalion as promotion for the successful action of the previous night. Other forces, including artillery, were being rushed from Petersburg.

The train halted at a wayside station called Point 3, a few miles south of Yaroslavl, amidst the cheers of a crowd of men, mostly civilians with Red armlets, thronging the platform. A burly, bearded man in a dirty suit of white cotton came forward to greet Ivan with outstretched hand. His right arm was wrapped in a bloody scarf. "Thank God you've come, comrade. They still hold the city—they took us by surprise. Most of our people were slaughtered in their beds or dragged out and hanged from lampposts. I escaped by an accident. I was out here on Party business. By the way," he added, "I am president of the soviet."

He led Ivan and his company commanders into the telegraph office and hastily introduced him to a dozen men there, two of them in uniform. "These are all of our responsible comrades whom we know to have escaped, although perhaps some of the others managed to hide. Here is the latest news and here are your instructions."

He picked up a sheet of paper. "Naval and military forces with artillery are now arriving from Petersburg. Here they are at this point on the other line—as you see, about the same distance from Yaroslavl as we are

—which for the time being will be headquarters. That is three miles from here as the crow flies, and these are your orders from their comrade commander.”

The telegram read, “Detrain immediately and advance in a northwestern direction to join hands with our forces moving to meet you. Leave a company to guard Point Three, extending defenses a suitable distance in the direction of Yaroslavl.”

Ivan snapped rapid questions, then outlined the plan of defense. A hundred of the workers and soldiers from the town had rifles but they were short of ammunition. He gave them each five rounds and instructed them to support his own company in a wide semicircle and fire at slow intervals in event of attack.

Within fifteen minutes his little army was on the march along a dusty road. The sun was hot but the forest gave them shade and hid them from hostile eyes. After they had marched for half an hour Ivan became uneasy; surely the detachment from the northern line should have met them before now, but their two guides on bicycles assured them there was no mistake. “It’s only a mile farther,” they said.

“I know,” said Ivan sharply, “but you don’t understand the situation. It’s clearly the intention of the Petersburg Command to form a line joining their station with Point Three.”

He decided to halt at the crest of a hill a few hundred yards ahead, but on reaching it saw a blue-clad column in the valley on the other side. To his relief he saw long naval guns amongst them. That meant

that he had been right: the line would be continuous.

Clearly there was nothing to be gained by advancing further. This hill would form an excellent battery position. As the sailors panted up the slopes a tall figure rushed ahead of them, shouting. It was Valya, who threw his arms around Ivan and kissed him on both cheeks and hugged him like a bear.

"I heard you were coming," he cried excitedly. "That's why I begged them to give me this command. Oh, comrade, this is splendid, to fight these devils side by side." He checked himself. "Have your men got food?"

"Not much but enough."

"Well, we have plenty. Come now, we'll hold a council of war while the men eat."

As Ivan guessed, the hill where they stood had been selected as an artillery position. While the guns were being put in place, Valya told him the plan of action. "Our main attack," he said, "will come from the north. We are moving about ten thousand men up there in fan-shape to attack the city from north and west. They won't be in position until five o'clock. In the meantime our two batteries here, four batteries of field guns at headquarters, and six other batteries along the northern curve will open fire. At three o'clock we are to advance, and there will be a simultaneous frontal attack along the railway. Our attack will be a feint to draw the enemy this way, but we are to push it home as hard as we can. Then our northern troops will hit them like a thunderbolt."

"Sounds good," said Ivan, "save for one thing. What if the enemy attacks first?"

"Oh, then, of course, we engage combat immediately."

"Hm." Ivan rubbed his chin, frowning. "I don't like the thought of our weak force at Point Three; if they rushed them and worked round our flank it might be unpleasant."

"They talked about that at headquarters but decided it wouldn't matter; it might even be an advantage, because our main object here is to get the enemy engaged as heavily as possible. A success for them here would be a fine way of doing it."

"Not so fine for us," said Ivan ruefully, "but I suppose we must take what comes."

He overestimated the skill and vigor of the Whites. Fifteen minutes before two o'clock a messenger arrived from Point 3 on a bicycle to report that scouts who had pushed forward to within a mile of Yaroslavl had detected no sign of the enemy.

They advanced without resistance to the outskirts of the town, where the Whites, who had seen the weakness of the attacking force, made a determined sortie. The assailants took cover as best they could but were forced to give ground. Along the railway, too, the Reds were heavily outnumbered.

From a military point of view the "siege" of Yaroslavl was a farce because the Red northern force met little resistance and occupied the town almost

without firing a shot. The rebels on the southern front were caught between two fires and surrendered promptly. They had expected Moscow to rise, and Petersburg and Kharkov. Savinkov fled, leaving them in the lurch.

The Bolsheviks taught Yaroslavl a lesson, written in letters of blood. It was the first of those cruel reprisals which marked the civil war in Russia and cost twenty lives for each one lost in actual fighting.

The Yaroslavl revolt was the beginning of the civil war, for already the Czechoslovak legions, strung in their trains along the railways from Kazan halfway to the Ural Mountains, were in open conflict with the local Soviet authorities. Thus they lit the fire of counterrevolution which spread across Siberia.

Ivan and Valya talked of this in the reconquered town.

"Sure, it means war," said the big sailor, "and we'll fight it together. This is a good omen. I can handle guns but I wish I knew as much about the war game as you do. It was you not I, who knew where to put the batteries. That's a thing we don't learn in the navy. In a ship a gun is planted and you can't uproot it."

Ivan grinned. "It matters like hell in the army. I've seen too many batteries wiped out because they picked the wrong position. Now tell me all you've been doing since I saw you in Moscow."

All night they swapped stories, how Valya had paid off old scores in the first revolution at Sveaborg.

"Yes," he said grimly, "ours was a rough ship, you

know. The captain believed in discipline, and they treated us rough. I pitched that captain overboard, and two others after him—they were my meat—a lieutenant and a commander. I'll tell you what happened. In the second year of the war there was a review—I was in the Baltic Fleet at first, you know, before they moved me to Sevastopol—and that morning I slipped on a ladder and gashed my head. It was only a scratch but some drops of blood trickled down and stained my collar. When we were lined up ready for review the lieutenant came along and saw it. 'You filthy ape,' he said, 'how dare you come here with a dirty collar!' He ripped it off my neck and banged it against my nose. Then like a fool I tried to explain that I had fallen and cut my head. But you can't do that in the navy."

"Nor in the army, either," cut in Ivan. "I know, boy—I learned that lesson, too."

"He hit me in the stomach, not that it hurt much, and told me to get to hell out of there, below decks. After the review I was called up before the officer of the watch, for insubordination. They made quite a case of it because discipline was getting slack, they said. The captain paraded the whole crew that night and made a speech about discipline. Then they made me lick the length of the deck with my tongue, on all fours, like a dog, to teach me, they said, the difference between cleanness and dirt, with the whole crew watching. And I the strongest man aboard, who could have killed any two of them with my bare hands."

"Why didn't you?" said Ivan.

"That's why," said the sailor, and stuck out his tongue. "See that scar"—there was a seam across his tongue, half an inch from its tip—"I damn near bit it through to hold myself in check. I was a Party member already, although they didn't know it, luckily for me. But I knew they'd shoot me if I moved a muscle. No, sir, I went down on my knees like a dog and licked the deck. Yes," he said, "and from that very deck I threw the captain and his watch officer and the young lieutenant. The young one had it easiest; his head squashed on an ice floe—he died easy. But the other two had some minutes' swimming in which to think it over."

Valya had taken part in the attack on the Winter Palace. "When we got there, they gave up," he said. "As a matter of fact, the place could have been rushed in half an hour, but everything was so confused that day. To tell the honest truth I don't believe we ever really made the October Revolution at all; it just happened. But once the fleet got its teeth in, the thing was over."

Before they went to sleep he asked Ivan seriously, "What are you going to do?"

Ivan shrugged his shoulders; he was feeling good, better than he had felt since he first reached Moscow. "Whatever they tell me," he said. "If you are right about these damned Czechs, maybe they'll send me there. My job is fighting, as Druzak always said."

"I guess you'll get your fighting, but here's my idea. I've got some pull with Dybenko, you know, the com-

mander here today. I'll suggest to him that they hold your outfit up here in the north and say that we'd like to go together with my crowd, if there's fighting in the east. He was damned pleased with us today, told me we did just what was needed to fool those blasted Whites, and he asked who it was commanding the soldiers with me, and I told him it was you and that you were a friend of mine. I'll speak to him tomorrow."

The next day Ivan received orders to hold his battalion at Yaroslavl, subject to further instruction from the Petersburg War Council, to which it was now transferred. Valya had been better than his word, for Ivan was given leave in Petersburg in recognition of his "meritorious conduct" in the capture of the town.



CHAPTER XXI

VALYA TOOK IVAN out to Kronstadt where he lunched with the naval commanders. Two things about them puzzled him. They were burning for war, which they agreed had already begun again, and no one got drunk.

Even more to his surprise he felt the same way himself; he drank vodka—of course they all did—but not much of it, and he, too, felt that it was fine to get back into battle, to have known once more the thrill of danger, and he liked their frank envy of him and Valya, who had been in the Yaroslavl show.

He asked them about it. "I don't understand," he said. "Valya here and all of you and I myself, we were so fed up with the war before that we wouldn't fight any more. We told the soldiers not to fight; all Russia was tired of fighting—everyone knew it. And yet now you, and I again, are just itching to get back to it. What's the answer?"

"And another thing. When I first met Valya he was drunk as a cobbler, and I got drunk when I could; everyone did, but we are all of us sober now. What's the answer to that?"

They shouted at him all round the table. "Where's

your ideology, comrade? Call yourself a Bolshevik? You're nothing but a soldier, a poor dumb foot-slogger who never learned to think. Don't you know it's our war this time? That's what makes the difference. Before we were fighting for them, the officers and landlords and bosses; now we're fighting for ourselves."

"My God," cried Ivan, clasping his head dramatically, "you sailors drive me crazy. Do you think I don't know that yet? Of course it's our war, I know that; but the point I'm asking is why do we want to go back to it—the mud and stink and bad food and lice and all the bloody mess of war? Of course we fight for the revolution, I know that; but I say there isn't a man here who doesn't want to go, although he knows what it's like. And that's what I don't understand."

That checked them. "Well, I'll tell you," said a short man with the rank of captain, who had a stiff brown beard and clever eyes. "There are two reasons. First, we are all young and we like excitement and danger—that goes with youth—and all of us are leaders of men and born fighters, or we wouldn't be here now. I'm not boasting, I'm stating facts. There's not a man at this table who had any rank or leadership three years ago, but we had the stuff of leaders inside us—I tell you I'm not boasting, you know it's true—and the revolution brought it out.

"That's what a revolution does, it explodes the pent-up energy of a nation and gives the real men a chance to lead instead of the old admirals who have gone up by seniority, or the bastard sons of grand dukes, or

the la-di-da young officers who were born with a golden spoon in their mouths. With us it's different. We, I tell you, have strength and fire inside us and the revolution let it loose. Look at Napoleon's army; there was hardly one of the good ones who didn't start like us. That's what a revolution does; we've won power by our own strength and now we want to use it, and the quickest way is war. Let them try and fight us, the English and the French and these White Russian bastards. We'll show them what we want to show them—that's your answer, comrade soldier."

"You win," said Ivan, "and a damned good answer, too. But what about my other question? Here are we, a crowd of Russians celebrating a victory, the great battle of Yaroslavl, in which the boys who won it hardly fired a shot. Valya and I had some fighting, but don't you folks think that the Whites at Yaroslavl were anything to anyone who has fought against the Germans. And you know our peasant proverb, 'No one drinks milk or water save babies or *batraks*.'¹ Why don't we drink vodka as we used to?"

The bearded man came back at him again. "I told you that already," he said, "because now and henceforth we are the leaders, not the led. And that means we have responsibility. We might like to let ourselves go, and heaven knows we all do sometimes, but it doesn't seem right somehow. We've got a job to do, so we can't let go. What's more," he added thoughtfully, "you don't get drunk when you're busy and interested

¹ The poorest landless peasants.

and doing something you like doing. I mean," he said, "you don't get drunk when you're strong and happy. You don't need to, it's only the weaklings and the sad ones who get drunk. They drink to lift their hearts and dull their sorrow. Isn't that true?"

"Of course not," shouted Valya, "unless you call me a weakling, comrade, and I never had no sorrow, except when that sookin sin of a captain made me lick the deck. And I paid him back for that. The night I first met Vanusha I got drunk because I felt good. I wasn't low or weak or sad. I just felt fine, so I went and got drunk, and liked it."

"You're proving my point," said the captain, "you thought you felt good but really you didn't at all. I know you're as strong as a bull and that you didn't think you were sick or sorry, but deep down inside you was the memory of that deck-licking performance burning you. Ain't I right, Ivan Petrovich?"

Ivan nodded. "You win again, comrade, but I've just thought of another thing. I mean it's only two o'clock now and all of you have jobs to do this afternoon. If it was evening and work all over, wouldn't we make a night of it? I mean surely there's such a thing as convivial drinking, no question of drowning sorrow but just having a good time together."

The captain pulled his beard. "Yes," he said, "there you have me. I suppose that's true, or might be, but not in the Red navy, not nowadays—or mighty little. I don't know how it is with you folks in the army,

but we simply can't afford to sit up nights and drink; we have too damned much to do. Is the army idle in Moscow?"

"I'd say not," said Ivan, "you're right for the third time. Good God, we're so busy we don't have time to eat, much less drink. . . ."

And from there the conversation developed on the old, old theme of whether army or navy did more work or was more useful to its country.

It was after seven when Ivan reached Petersburg in a swift powerboat. Unexpectedly, Valya was detained for a meeting in which Ivan had no part, and there were others returning to the capital so he went with them.

As he entered the Hotel Astoria the porter stopped him. "I have a message for you, comrade," he said with a friendly grin, "and I hope it's a good message." He paused, then added gaily, "She was charming, your girl comrade, I told her all about my arm."

He was a good fellow, this porter, so different from hotel porters in the old days, police spies and gendarmes all the lot of them. He had been a soldier in Samsonov's army in East Prussia right at the beginning and was shot in the arm at the battle of the Masurian Lakes where Hindenburg first won fame. The wound seemed slight and Georgey Petrovich was lucky—he got back to the rear for treatment when tens of thousands of his comrades, wounded and un-

wounded alike, were drowned in the swampy waters. His wound seemed slight, but there were complications; there was something about a sectioned nerve and a threat of gangrene. By accident he came under the notice of a distinguished surgeon, Vladimirov, professor of the Petersburg Academy of Medicine.

"They were going to cut my arm off," Georgey Petrovich always said. "They had me down on the operating table and there was no chloroform. They said it would hurt like hell and they were going to strap me down so that I couldn't kick and spoil the operation. Then Vladimirov came—you've heard of him of course—Vladimirov, the greatest surgeon in the world. He came and looked at my arm, and looked again. 'Why this is a unique case,' he said, 'this is a case which interests me very much. Take the man off the table. I will treat this case myself.'

"So they took me off the table and sent me to Vladimirov's own hospital, where everything was clean like heaven and the Sisters of Mercy looked like angels in their veils and robes of white.

"Vladimirov said to me, 'You are lucky, my man,' he said. 'They would have cut your arm off, but I will save your arm because you are an interesting case.' And he did save it, don't forget it, look at it; it's still here with me just as good as the other, and just as strong. It hurt a good deal, I tell you that, three operations one after another in four weeks. It hurt like hell but that was what Vladimirov told me. He said, 'I can save your arm,' and he did save it, and he said, 'It will hurt

like hell, far more than cutting it off,' and it did hurt, 'but if you trust me I will save your arm,' and he did save it. That was Vladimirov's way."

Georgey Petrovich loved to tell this story. It had become to him something which made him different from other men and set him apart from them. He no longer thought of himself as a humble citizen, one amongst millions, but as a unique case, a triumph of Vladimirov's surgery.

So he smiled at Ivan and said, "Your little comrade was very sorry that you were not here this morning. She left a note for you and here it is, and I told her all about my arm and she was deeply interested. She's a good girl, my boy, and don't you ever forget it."

Ivan opened the note and read it; he knew it came from Hilda.

I'm so sorry to have missed you, Ivan dearest. I must leave at noon today for Moscow, and they say you won't be back until this evening. Oh, Ivan, I did want to see you. You are so dear to me, my little brother, and there is so much I have to say to you. But I only heard last night that you were here, and now it's too late. Never mind, we shall meet again—of that I'm sure. In the meantime, all my love to you and the best of luck.

Your sister,

HILDA

Why did she say sister, he wondered, when the two of them had been lovers? Did she know that the bond between them was different from and deeper than sex?

He was sorry that he had missed her but was glad as well. They were so close, he felt, and yet so far apart: so much they shared, so much they couldn't share. If only he could have loved her as he loved Nina, or if she could have loved him as she had loved her brother. He shrugged his shoulders. Why beat his brain against problems! Druzak had been right, or Dostoevsky, the duality of motives was beyond his understanding.

Valya came back to Petersburg the next day, cross and grumbling. "That damned Dybenko," he said. "You know, Ivan, old boy, it's good to know important people, but it's also a nuisance. I mean if he didn't like me I couldn't have worked your coming here, but because he likes me he won't let me go east with you."

"What do you mean, east? Who's going east?"

"Oh, haven't you heard? They're sending your outfit in a few days to Siberia, or anyway to Ekaterinburg. You know, we were right, Ivan, the thing has started. Those Goddamned Czechs have let the French and British stampede them against the revolution, and all Siberia's aflame." He lowered his voice. "Dybenko told me all about it. It's the peasants, you see—that's the real trouble, just what you were saying the other night on the train. And our people have been silly in places. Did you hear about the decree that was issued in some Siberian town by the local soviet, about nationalizing women? The place was full of refugees from here and Moscow, nobles and officers and rich folks, people who had run away and taken lots of money with them, and

of course they were debauching all the girls, and it made the local people sore. So they issued a decree saying that if this went on all women in the town would be 'nationalized' and free for all. They didn't mean it seriously, but just to warn the Whites that sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, that if they took our girls we might take some of theirs, without asking leave. But that wasn't the way it sounded, and Dybenko says that the story got abroad and is being used all over the world against the Bolsheviks, to prove that we are worse than anarchists, simply devils without decency or heart. And he says the Allies may win. The last big German offensive was a failure and the Americans are pouring into France at the rate of a quarter of a million men a month. Now if they win, the English I mean especially, you can bet they'll try to smash us."

Ivan nodded. "I know," he said, "I heard last night that Druzak thinks the war may be over before Christmas. Look at this Archangel business; instead of the World Revolution on our side we may have the world against us. But why wouldn't Dybenko let you go?"

"Oh, that's the trouble—he said he wanted me here. He said, 'Look, Valya, there'll be plenty of time for fighting, but now I want you here. You're a man-driver; you know how to handle men and how to train them, and the men like you. That's what we want now, to train our men, and make them feel the way we feel, that our revolution's worth fighting for. And you can do it. Later on, maybe, you'll have your belly-

ful of fighting; but now I need you here to talk to them and train them.'

"I did my best but I couldn't change him, and I suppose he's right. But I'd like to go, especially with you, Ivan. You know, I like you. I like you more than anyone I ever met, right from the first day on the platform at that station where we talked together, you remember. I never had a friend before, a man friend I mean, a friend like you. Of course I've known lots of girls, I always liked girls, but that's different somehow. And you are different, too. I can't explain it, but there's something in me which says I ought to go with you, that you'll need me and I won't be there. You're much smarter than I, I can hardly read, and you know German, and you know about war. Look at the other day about the guns; I didn't know where to put them. You could be the brain and I would be the fist. By God, boy, can't you see it, you and I together, couldn't we conquer Siberia and chase the Japanese back into the sea? If only I had the words to convince Dybenko, but it's no use, I did my best, but he wouldn't let me go."

Ivan looked at him calmly. The sailor's eyes were wet with tears.

"What does it matter, Valya? You'll join me out there later. Of course, you're my friend and comrade, I know that, too, but we're all part of the same thing, aren't we? And we're trying to do our job. What Dybenko said was right, we'll need trained troops in the time that's coming. Stay and train them, comrade,

and we'll meet at Vladivostok, when you command the naval brigade and I command the army. And we'll throw the Whites and the English and the Japanese and the rest of them right out of our Soviet Russia—throw them into the sea.”

Then began a strange life for Ivan, a train life. He had traveled in trains before, but he'd never lived in trains like this. He did not know it, but the first six months of the civil war was fought in trains, or from trains. The Czechs lived in trains and the Whites, and the Reds, too. In their trains they were safe; they plated their engines and most of the cars with sheet iron, and the trains were their bases and they never left them. It was rare in those days that anyone blew up bridges, even when the enemy was advancing, because they might need the bridges themselves.

Ivan commanded his train, a thousand men and four seventy-seven guns on flatcars with their gunners, and six freight cars full of ammunition. Ten miles from Ekaterinburg a group of workers met him. “We killed the Czar two weeks ago,” they told him, “and now the Whites are in the city. You can't go through. We killed the Czar,” they said, “and his wife and children—we killed them all.”

Ivan was startled. “Kill Romanov if you like,” he said, “but why his wife and children, why kill them?”

“You are young, comrade,” they told him, “you are young and you don't know much. Did you ever hear of Rennenkampf? In the name of the Czar, with the

Czar's mandate, Rennenkampf and his Cossacks broke our revolution here in the Urals in 1906. 'Repressing sedition' they called it, and those of us they didn't shoot they stripped and beat. Who knows how many they killed—seventy thousand is one figure—and for every man they killed they beat five, and women too, stripped them naked and beat them. But one day they sent him here to Ekaterinburg, Nicolai Alexandrovich Romanov, once Czar of all the Russias, and his wife and children. We would sooner have had Rennenkampf, though the devil knows where he is, and anyway he did it in the name of the Czar, didn't he? And the Czar was responsible and approved of what he did.

"Then the Whites came closer, from the east. We'd heard about the Czechs, that they'd turned against the revolution, and when the Whites came closer we took and shot them all—the Czar and his wife and the children and their doctor and their friends. There was too much blood on their heads for us to let them go. Blood calls for blood, comrade, and what was their blood, ten or twelve of them altogether, against the blood of seventy thousand whom Rennenkampf had killed?"

"All right," said Ivan, "never mind, but what am I to do?"

"Oh," they told him, "we have orders for you. You are to cut in behind the Whites to get on through Tyumen towards Omsk; to get in behind them, those are your orders. Here's the telegram from Petersburg."

He read it and raised his eyebrows. "It can't be

done," he said. "If you say the Whites are in Ekaterinburg already, how in hell can we get through?"

"You won't get through—we'll switch you around. We're railway men, we'll fix it; somehow we'll switch you round. Trust us. And those are your orders, aren't they?"

So Ivan had to trust them and they switched him round. It was like that in the civil war in Russia. Everything was fluid, no one knew who or why or where or what; sometimes they were friends and sometimes enemies. It wasn't a war but a madhouse. As you came to a station you didn't know what had happened, whether they'd greet you with machine guns or food and flags. A madhouse, that's what it was, not war but chaos, changing overnight, it seemed. You couldn't tell anything, you couldn't know who was friend or foe, or why. All you knew was your train, and that was your base and fortress. You held to your train and you fought from it, and sometimes you got through by telegraph to Petersburg and they gave you orders. But they didn't know, how could they? So you fended for yourself and took the risks and chances.

Until one day the enemy was stronger and the train was blocked. There was nothing they could do this time, no side line to run off on, no channel of escape. Then they left the train that had been their home and fortress for six weeks; they blew the engine to pieces with dynamite and smashed the cars with crowbars, but they couldn't take the guns. They had no horses and nothing to pull the guns, and the shells were far

too heavy. So they smashed the guns, too, and went off across the fields.

Nearly a thousand strong they were and Ivan had hammered them into shape by this time—good troops he held in his hand, trained men who would follow where he led them. It was getting colder now and the first October snows were falling. They had no supplies and no base, and the Whites were strong throughout Siberia.

“All right,” he said, “let’s live on the land and raid the Whites; let’s take our food from them and from the foolish peasants who listen to them. Can’t they understand, these stupid peasants, that if the Whites come back the landlords come back and the whole thing begins again. Can’t they understand that? Well, if they can’t, we’ll teach them.”

So they raided the land and cut in whenever they could upon the railway, tore the rails apart or blew a culvert to pieces and stopped a train, then rushed the train, sweeping down like crows upon corpses, rushed it and took no prisoners. In that war there was no mercy. Of course their numbers dwindled. They were harassing the Whites, that they knew, but the Whites were stronger, and it happened sometimes that they didn’t win.

It was strange dream warfare, this was, without orders or news, fighting like the blade of a rapier that darts in and out and spears and stabs in the hand of its master. But they had no master; there was no one to give them orders. They speared and stabbed and raided

and advanced and retreated as the fortunes of war would have it. What was happening in the rest of Russia they neither knew nor cared, but they were there to fight and harass the Whites, and fight and harass them. And that was what they did.

Then Ivan met Sergey Torov. It was a bad night, that night. There weren't many of them any more, only about four hundred, and they'd raided a junction to attack a munition train. They were short of munitions and needed them, and word had reached them that this train was coming, a supply train with guns—they didn't care about that—but machine guns and cartridges, that was what they wanted. Word came that it was coming and they laid their plans to take it. They broke the rails on a slope of the hill where the train went up a grade, and they waited there in ambush, machine guns ready. The train came puffing up the slope, clanking slowly along until they could see the faces of the soldiers in the car behind the engine. Right then Ivan knew he had made a mistake, he should have broken the line at the bottom of the slope instead of at the top—that might have crashed them—but it was too late to think of it now. So he blew his whistle and they let go with the machine guns and swept the train with bullets, but the enemy had learned something, too; they ducked behind their iron plating and let them fire and didn't even answer. If he'd had those cannon he left behind, the guns would have blown them to hell, but the guns had been left behind. So Ivan told the machine gunners to keep firing while

they rushed them. "We'll rush them," he ordered, "and you keep firing. Go on, keep it up until we get to the ditch beside the railway; give it to them hot and heavy."

They rushed—they'd done it before, it was easy. They knew how and the machine guns covered their attack, but the Whites had learned something, too, and they held their fire until the last minute, then they answered.

Ivan's men got across the ditch. There were only six yards more to the train, but they couldn't do it. Their machine guns couldn't help any more, and the enemy's were flaming death. They couldn't do it. They wasted precious ammunition and got nothing for it, and lost eighty men. If only they'd had those guns. But why talk of that, the guns weren't there. They drew off carrying the wounded—poor devils, what hope for them? There's no hope for wounded in a war like this, but you've got to do what you can for them, haven't you? So they marched to the nearest village. Maybe they'd take care of them, and if they didn't, well, *nichevo!* But why not try? It was all they could do for them.

In that village Ivan met Sergey Torov, the man whose name he had taken, whose papers he had taken, when he went to the war three years before. Or was it thirty years, or three thousand years? They came to the village late at night. The moon was shining and there was a crackle of frost under their feet, and it had rained that morning and the roads were wet. And

then it grew colder and the cat ice crackled under their feet as they marched into the village with their wounded. It was dark and glum, there were no lights in the whole village, no sign of human life.

"Now listen, you," said Ivan to his captain, "you are a Siberian, you must know these people. For heaven's sake, Pavel Pavlovich, let's not have to fight them. Can't you talk to them? It doesn't matter about us so much, but something must be done for our wounded. Or shall we shoot them here and forget it, and put them out of their misery? You're a Siberian. Can you handle these peasants of yours, or can't you?"

The other shrugged his shoulders. He was a stocky Siberian peasant himself and he knew his breed. "God knows," he said. "If we're lucky—maybe; if not, well, hell, Ivan Petrovich, we'll make them do it."

"Yes," said Ivan, "I know that; that's easy, we can make them do it. But what about our wounded? Do you think the news of our raid on that train won't spread, and quickly? We can't stay here, you must know that; we've got to move. What I'm thinking of is our wounded—that's what I'm telling you. If you can fix these people so they'll be friendly, we can leave the boys here with them while we move on and draw the fire somewhere else. But if you can't fix it, let's shoot them and have it over."

That was the way it was in the Civil War, there was no mercy, and often it was better to shoot the wounded than let the others catch them. A dirty business, that Civil War, when they took wounded men from the huts

and put their hands in boiling water, or put bars on the doors of the sheds where they were lying in the hay and fired the sheds. A bad war, the worst of wars, the Civil War, the cruelest of wars, when they hated each other so savagely that they wreaked their spite against the wounded. There is nothing more cruel than that, to torture the man who is tortured already, to double his pain with pain, to hurt the suffering, and to kill the dying. But they did it—both sides did it—because they hated each other far worse than they'd hated the Germans.

It was a big village, three hundred houses or more, straggling along the side of the hill, seven miles from the railway, and the houses were strong and well built. The place seemed prosperous but the people ran from them until they caught a boy and made him talk.

"Are you Red or White?" Ivan asked him. The boy shuffled his feet in the snow and didn't answer. "Come on, speak up," said Ivan, "we won't hurt you; you know we're Reds because you've seen our flag, but anyway we won't hurt you."

"What do we know?" said the boy. "All we want is to be let alone. Red or White, you're soldiers and all soldiers are the same; they come and steal our cattle and horses, and our women, too, if they get a chance. But you won't get them here, we saw you coming hours ago. We have scouts out now, we know how soldiers act. There isn't a horse or cow or woman in the village. They're hidden where you won't find them," he added defiantly.

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"Where are the men?" said Ivan. "Are they hidden, too, your brave Siberian men?"

"Some are in their houses, but most are up at the schoolhouse holding a meeting, to decide what to do about you."

"All right," said Ivan, "take us there. I told you we won't hurt you, and we won't try to steal your cattle, even if we could find them, and maybe we could, for cattle leave tracks in the mud, don't forget that, my boy. Never mind about that. We've got wounded men here and we want them cared for."

The boy's face was less sullen. "It might be done," he said, "because the last ones here were Whites and they killed ten of our people to make them say where the cattle were hidden, and the girls. But nobody told them. I said we don't like any soldiers, but we like the Whites least of all."

Before they reached the schoolhouse, a delegation of peasants came out to meet them. They carried red flags and a white banner, with sickle and hammer on it in black.

"They're smart, these Siberians," chuckled Pavel Pavlovich in Ivan's ear, "I'll bet they tell us they're the village soviet, but if we had been Whites, they would have had the priest to meet us with a holy icon and a portrait of the Czar, and they'd have said they were the local elders. I tell you, these boys are smart."

Sure enough, the man who carried the banner, a big-bearded fellow in a heavy sheepskin coat, came forward with hand outstretched. "Welcome, comrade,"

he said to Ivan, "I am the president of the village soviet. We are poor here; the Whites, blast them"—he spat in the snow—"came here two weeks ago and stole our cows and horses. But what we have we will give you, bread and tea and some vodka, and potatoes and dried fish."

Then Ivan saw Sergey Torov standing in the crowd with a small red flag. He knew him at once and jumped forward. "Hey, you," he said, "I know you, and you're in debt to me. I told you we'd meet again. You're Sergey Torov, the man whose name I took."

The other looked at him stupidly. "What do you mean?" he said. "I never saw you in my life."

"Oh, yes, you did, Sergey Sergeyich, and your wife would know me quick enough. Don't you remember the night by the mill when I came dressed in wolfskins and took your paper, the order that would have sent you to the war? And your girl said I was crazy to want to go and fight, and I told you I'd bought your life and would come one day to claim my debt. Do you remember that, Sergey Sergeyich?"

The peasant's face changed and he clapped his hand on Ivan's shoulder. "Of course I remember," he shouted, "a crazy kid in wolfskins. Marussia talks of you often. She always said we'd meet again and repeated your words that one day you'd come to me and claim a price of life and death."

That made a difference and Ivan was quick to catch it. "Comrades," he said to the peasants, "Sergey Sergeyich here will speak for me. We're old friends, the

two of us. I trusted him once and he trusted me too, so now he'll believe my word. We have all the horses we need and we won't steal yours; we have food enough and a cache in the hills not far away, in the woods near the railway—we took it from a White train. All we need is machine guns and cartridges, but that's not your business, and I have my men in hand; we won't molest your women. We come as friends. Will you treat us as friends or not? Now talk among yourselves; go back if you like into your schoolroom to talk among yourselves."

The big peasant with the banner turned to Sergey Torov. "Is that right, Sergey Sergeyich, what he says?"

"Yes, that's right, and Marussia liked him. You know she's never wrong."

The man laughed. "Marussia is my daughter," he said to Ivan, "and a damned smart girl. If she said you're all right, you are all right, so let's be friends."

"I told her she was smart after I had known her for two minutes," replied Ivan, laughing, "and I'm not so slow myself."

After that it was easy. They arranged for the care of the wounded, and the women and cows and horses came back, and the troops were allotted quarters in the cottages. Marussia's father, Peter Fomich, took Ivan and his captain. "Stay with me, you two," he said, "and we'll have a party. My house is the biggest in the village." He looked at Ivan with shrewd peasant eyes. "Do you mind if my brother comes too? He's the priest, you see, so we sent him out to the woods with

the stock and the women, when we saw you coming."

Pavel Pavlovich shouted with laughter, and smacked Ivan on the back. "Didn't I tell you," he said, "didn't I tell you right? These Siberians aren't so dumb as they think in western Russia. Ain't I right, Peter Fomich? When the Whites came didn't the priest go out to meet them with an icon and you carried a portrait of the Czar?"

The peasant laughed also. "You're one of us, are you? I can tell it by your voice. And by God, you're right, comrade, of course we did. And the sons of bitches killed ten of our people, do you know that?" His face darkened. "When will this end, this plague of soldiers raiding and stealing. When will the land have peace? I don't mean you, of course—you're friends—but the others, Red or White, they're all the same. Why can't they leave us alone to plow our fields and raise our cattle? We're ready to pay taxes, not too much, but in fair measure. Why can't they leave us alone? First, they took our young men to the war. Whose war, what war, how do we know and what do we care? Then they come raiding, stealing cows and horses, grabbing our food and our girls. To hell with them, I say, all of them. Why can't they leave us alone?"

He stopped and eyed them sharply. A tall man he was, six feet two or more, fifty years old, with a long brown beard scarcely flecked with gray, a strong Siberian peasant big as a bear in his sheepskin coat. "I speak too fast," he said, "but we are friends, and you

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know the proverb, 'Hard words for a friend, soft words for an enemy.' Ain't I right?"

"Of course, you're right," said Ivan, "so bring your brother the priest, and Marussia and my namesake, Sergey Torov, the man whose name I took."



CHAPTER XXII

MARUSSIA CAME with her husband, Sergey Torov, and on his shoulder a plump blond child. "Put me down," he said, "put me down. I'm a Bolshevik, too. Grandpa's a *kulak* and *papasha* doesn't know what he is, but me and Mama, we're Bolsheviks." He stood up before Ivan and saluted, a little rosy-cheeked boy, in a woolly coat and breeches, "Tovarish," he said solemnly to Ivan, "you are my tovarish. Look," he pointed proudly to the red star embroidered on the wool above his heart, "Mama did that," he said. "Grandpa didn't like it and Granduncle Grisha says it's very bad and naughty. But Mama did it, so it can't be naughty; she's a Bolshevik and so am I."

Ivan picked the little creature up and held him on his knee. "That's right, tovarish," he said. "You'll show them, won't you, when you're bigger? There won't be any Whites then; we'll have beaten them, but you'll show the world what we've got in Russia. You'll build things, won't you? Bridges and houses and mines and factories, and trains and automobiles and tractors. You mustn't think of fighting—that's our job, and we

shall finish it. You've got to build things—that's your job."

"I want to fight," said the child, "I want a gun to shoot the Whites. I'm a Bolshevik and I want to fight."

Ivan looked at Marussia and suddenly something hurt him. A tall dark girl she was, with a mane of black hair cut short around her neck. She watched her little son with love and pride. She looked at him, not at Ivan.

"Are you right?" she said. "Do you mean he won't have to fight?"

"I tell you no—we'll do the fighting. We'll fight the Whites and the British and the French and the Japs and the whole world if need be, and we'll drive them out from our Russian soil so that the little ones who follow us will have a chance to build."

"Ah, prophet, you are a good prophet," she mocked him gaily. "Do you remember that night beside the mill when I said you were going to death and you told me no, that one day we'd meet again and you'd make Sergey pay the price of life and death? You prophesied right that time. Will you be right again? Won't he have to fight too, twenty years hence, my little Misha?"

She caught the child in her arms, but he kicked and struggled. "Let me go, Mama, let me go. I want to sit on the soldier's knee. I like the soldier, I want to be a soldier."

"What fools men are!" she said. "Big or small,

they're just the same. All right then, sit on his knee," and she gestured him back to Ivan. "What fools men are, always with talk of war and fighting. . . . It does no good to you and makes sorrow for us women, to lose our husbands and children.

"Is it true, what you say," she asked, "that there will be no war for this one? I thought I would die that time before if they took Sergey from me, but Misha is my own. He's part of me, that came from my own body. I will never let him go."

"I told you right before," said Ivan, "and I tell you right again."

He felt strange and light-headed. It seemed that he was here and somewhere else at the same time, as if the chair on which he was sitting and the child on his knee weren't real, as if he was dreaming something that he had dreamt before or which had happened before. He suddenly knew what it was. This girl reminded him of Nina, the way her hair was cut, it must be that, or the same tense eagerness of voice.

"Did you ever kill anybody?" said the child. "When I grow up and I'm a soldier I'll kill them all, I'll kill hundreds and hundreds."

Ivan's tongue felt thick and it was hard for him to speak. "You won't need to kill them," he said, "we are doing that for you. Don't think of killing, *malchik*; think of building, that's your job."

He looked sternly at Marussia. "Don't let him talk like that. I know you can't help it with all this war and fighting, but it's wrong, I tell you. You mustn't let

him talk like that or think that way. We are the killers and they who follow us are the builders. You understand me, don't you? I took your husband's death on me and gave him life not death; and so I'll do for this one. I'll give my life for his."

"Why do you say that?" she answered, wide-eyed. "Oh, prophet, aren't you frightened? Why should you give your life? You gave Sergey life, but you said it would cost you nothing, that he must pay the price, as we do pay, and how gladly, in caring for your wounded. But now to speak of giving life, Ivan Petrovich, giving your life. Why do you say that?"

"I don't know," said Ivan, "and I don't care. I want to give him peace. That's what we're fighting for, I tell you, to make peace throughout the earth, so that women shall not lose their husbands or their children, so that men can live like brothers."

A deep voice interrupted him. "Peace indeed, soldier, but how can you talk of peace in the midst of war?"

The newcomer was a priest in long black robe with snow-white hair and beard. He was taller than his brother, the president of the village soviet, and much older, but the flesh of his cheeks was firm and there was none of the rheum of age to mar the brightness of his eyes. "Peace to you, soldier," he said, "in a land where there is no peace, and the blessing of God upon you, Bolshevik, to whom there is no God." He made the sign of the cross.

Ivan looked at him and liked him. "Never mind

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about God," he said. "If there is one He must be cruel or negligent to leave the world like this, or don't you think that a God with all power is to blame for a world like this? Or is He insane too? Surely it is better to think that there is no God than to think of a crazy one."

"Ask her," said the old man with a wave of his hand towards Marussia, "ask her about the time when the *malchik* on your knee was born. Had she no pain then, wasn't there blood and suffering? But the child was born—that was God's doing. Not even the sparrows are too small for Him to number. The world is now in travail. God has willed it, but the new life which is coming may be better than the old."

Ivan was slow to answer. He knew what he thought, but he knew sincerity when he met it, and this man was sincere.

"In the new life there will be no need of gods, or priests, either. You priests have used gods for your own advantage, to fool the masses, to keep them dumb and blind and to hold them contented. You take the women and tell them stories and frighten them with hell and devils; you take the children and frighten them, and you say it's for God's glory. You dope them with dreams of paradise which you may believe yourself, but are they true? And all the time you are no more than an instrument for the czars and landlords. And that is true."

There was no heat or anger in the priest's voice as he replied. "You think this and I think that, but you

doubt while I believe. I know there is a God and that all happens by His will. His ways are inscrutable, and who am I to fathom them? But I know that His law rules the universe. You may not believe it as I believe, but you can't deny it."

Ivan shrugged his shoulders. "I neither deny nor affirm," he said. "We are talking at cross purposes."

"Don't be cross," cried the child. "Uncle Ivan, you must be friends with Granduncle Grisha, not cross with him. I love him very much. He tells me stories at night about Jesus, when his father and mother took him into Egypt riding on a donkey. I've never seen a donkey, but I'd know one if I saw it—there's a picture in my book. Have you ever seen a donkey, Uncle Ivan? Why don't we have donkeys here? Won't you tell me a story about all the Whites you shot? I'm a Bolshevik, too, and when I get big I'll shoot all the Whites in the world. Tell me a story, Uncle Ivan, about the Whites you shot."

The old priest looked at them both and his heart was heavy. Was this then what it came to, more bloodshed and more killing? Did the priests of Egypt feel like this, he wondered, when the Greek and Roman soldiers came to wreck their temples? He knew that God ruled in Heaven, but why was there so much suffering on earth?

Marussia put the child to bed and brought food and drink, bread and meat and the strong Siberian beer that is brown like Ufa honey, and vodka.

How good and restful it was to be with friends after

months of turmoil, to sit quietly amongst friends, and feel warm and contented after the stress of fighting. And to watch this tall girl who reminded him of Nina, so slim and eager and quick-minded, so happy in her home.

They stayed two days in the village; then a man came hurrying. He lived in a near-by town, he said, on the railway thirty miles east, where he worked on the railway. "We heard you were short of munitions, comrade," he told Ivan, "and there are twenty carloads in our yards, machine guns, rifles, and cartridges, and grenades as well. The Whites came in and smashed our soviet. They shot my brother and hanged all the members of the soviet they could catch. It was a pogrom—they hanged fifty people on lampposts and shot many more. We hate them. Can you help us?"

"What's their strength?" asked Ivan curtly. "You're right, we need munitions, but tell me, what's their strength?"

The man sat thoughtful. "There were two thousand," he said. "They're Cossacks, you know, from the Don. One battalion went away and two more companies have gone off foraging for cattle into the country. If you move quick—I don't think they have more than three hundred in the town, and some of us might help you. Some of us have pistols and a few rifles—we might raise hell to distract them when you strike. That would help, wouldn't it?"

Ivan talked it over with Pavel Pavlovich and the

others. It sounded good, only three hundred men against them and help in the town itself—they couldn't count much on that, but it might mean something—and twenty carloads of munitions in the yards: that sounded best of all. "All right," he told the man, "all right, comrade, we'll take a chance. Where are the Whites located?"

The man drew an outline with a lead pencil on the table of white pineboard. "They are here," he said, "and here. Now you come in like this from the northeast, you see, along this road. We'll start something at the other end, down near the station yards, not much because they're too strong for us, but something. Then you come along, as I say, and take them in the rear."

That was a quick fight and a good one, which moved like clockwork. As they trotted down the hill they heard the shooting at the other end of the town and the thud of bursting grenades. Sentries challenged them and they shot them quick and rushed on shouting. They poured through the town like wolves and took the Cossacks unawares. It didn't last long, only an hour, and the town was theirs, and they were breaking open the freight cars with crowbars to get the munitions and machine guns. All the town was there to help them, three thousand men and women, and children too, in the freight-yard. The kids, the children of the workers, had torches; they made a ring of their torches because there had been a break at the powerhouse and the electric power was cut.

There was a celebration that night in the town with parades and speeches, but Ivan told the local people to be careful. "They'll come back," he said, "it's too soon yet. They hold the railway, they're bound to come back. What you've got to do is to lay low and not try to fight them; send them through as they come; don't try to block their trains—it's too soon for that yet. Next year you can do that; by then we'll be able to help you, but they're still too strong for us. And above all, send these Czechs through, send them east whenever you get a chance. They want to go east, they want to go to Vladivostok and get out to America and back to their own country. Let them go east and the sooner the better. Once they're gone we can handle the Whites. We can talk to the White soldiers and make them understand that they're crazy to fight for the bosses. But we can't talk to the Czechs. I've tried it and I know."

Pavel Pavlovich took him up on that afterwards. "What do you mean," he said, "by saying that? The Czechs are men like us, aren't they? Why should they obey their officers any more than we did? Why don't they revolt, the men I mean, and join the revolution instead of fighting it?"

"Why do our men obey us?" said Ivan.

"Oh, that's different, we have an idea. They don't obey us because we're officers, not just from discipline, I mean, but because we have an idea and we're leading them where they want to go."

"So have the Czechs," said Ivan. "I'll tell you, Pavel,

though maybe I shouldn't say it, I think there's more than one idea. We have ours and I think it's right, but the Czechs have theirs, too, and I'm not so sure it's wrong. Their idea is nationalism, and that's a strong idea, especially with the smaller nations, like the Letts and the Poles and the Czechs, which have been oppressed for hundreds of years but have always kept the idea of their country in their hearts. Unless I am much mistaken we'll hear a lot more of nationalism in the next twenty years."

"Don't be silly, Ivan. Long before twenty years have passed there won't be any nationalism left; all the world will be a brotherhood of workers. Don't you know that all the talk of nationalism is invented by the capitalists to keep the masses in line, that it's just another form of opium for the people, as Marx said about religion? It won't last and religion won't last. Within twenty years there won't be any more of either."

"I hope you're right," said Ivan, "but I don't think so. I'm afraid some of the old ideas are stronger than we know."

Then they had a train once more, a train of their own and a good train, with two engines and plenty of food and cartridges and machine guns, and two cannon on flatcars, one in front and one behind. They couldn't wait to armor it; there wasn't time for that, but they picked up three hundred men to swell their ranks, most of them ex-soldiers, and set off boldly in

their train. It was crazy if they had stopped to think, a Red train to hazard alone in the depths of White country on a White railway. But what did they care? It was better to sleep in a train than to sleep in the forest, and the train was warm in winter. Those days were crazy anyway; everything was crazy, so who cared? You took what you could and didn't mind about tomorrow; tomorrow death might take you, so who cared? And they had food and munitions and a train instead of the trees and the darkness. The train was warmth and a fortress, so they took the train.

There was news, too, from Moscow. The Reds were striking out at the ring of steel around them. They had checked the British in the north. Riga and Reval in the Baltic were Red—they were striking out. And Stalin had broken the White pincers before they could join at Tsaritsyn on the Volga—later they called it Stalin-grad in commemoration—and the Czechs were gone from Kazan. Lenin had recovered, they heard, from the bullets of the girl assassin. Uritsky was killed and Sverdlov dead of typhus, and there was food shortage in Moscow, and epidemics, the water mains were frozen and the city was ravaged by fire. But the revolution wasn't beaten, the Bolsheviks weren't beaten; they were holding on like a bulldog with its teeth in the bull's neck, shaken and battered on the ground, bruised and bloody, but holding on. They wouldn't give way and they wouldn't loose their grip. They'd keep their teeth in the White bull's neck until they killed him. They would never let go.

They moved west this time. That line was clearer—there was little traffic moving west. Kolchak, they heard, had set up a government at Omsk and called himself Supreme Ruler of Siberia. It was better to go west to the Urals where the Whites still held but the Reds were growing stronger. The Czechs passed them going eastward. That was good, thought Ivan, get rid of the Czechs and their nationalism, the Czechs who'd sold out to France and Britain. Let them go and be damned to them, back to Vladivostok, and across the Pacific and home to their own country, and leave Reds and Whites to fight it out.

They halted at a station near a town eighty miles east of Ekaterinburg. That city was still in White hands, but Ivan thought he might repeat his earlier maneuver and swing round and get through the mountains. If the Czechs were retreating, the Reds must be advancing; perhaps he could get in touch with them. So he halted at the station and talked to the railway workers. They were friends and they gave him news.

"The Whites hold this town near here," they said. "It's a town of traders and *kulaks*, without factories. It's not a big town, about ten thousand people, small merchants and cattle dealers and *kulaks*. It's a White town. The Whites haven't many troops there, perhaps a thousand, perhaps more but not much more. They're not strong, but you'll have to fight them if you want to get through to the west. They've heard about you, we know that, and they're waiting for you. You'll have to fight them. If you've got guns and cartridges

we can help you. There are three thousand of us at the shops here, and most of us would like to help you. We have a soviet here, we railway workers from the shops, but when the Whites came they hanged our leaders and took our guns away. If you have guns a lot of us will help you."

"We have guns," said Ivan, "and we can use your help."

They plotted carefully on the map how the attack should be made. There was room for two hundred workers on the train, and the rest of them, seven hundred, would march along the tracks as the train went forward, crawling. Half a mile from the town they would halt and disembark, and put fans of troops on either flank to curve in on the town north and south, while the train went forward in the middle, like a spearhead. That was their plan, but Ivan did not like it. "I don't like it," he said, "it's too risky. Don't you think so, Pavel Pavlovich?"

The Siberian nodded. "I think you're right," he said. "Let's reconnoiter before we attack too fast. How would it be," he suggested, "to have some of these fellows go in ahead of us, not with rifles, of course, they couldn't do that, but with pistols? When's your market day here?" he asked one of the local men.

"Day after tomorrow, yes, that's right, today's Thursday—the market's always on Saturday."

"All right, then, why not let five hundred of your fellows go in as if to market, carrying pistols? Or do they search you for arms on the outskirts of the town?"

"No, they don't search. Of course you couldn't take a rifle, but they don't search for revolvers. We go in and out as we please."

"Yes, I think that's better," said Ivan. "Besides—we never know—there might be one of these damned Czech trains coming through again, and we'd put our heads in a wasps' nest. I think you're right, Pavel Pavlovich, it's better to reconnoiter. Never eat your bread before it's baked; that's a good proverb."

They argued to and fro, but that was what they decided, that the workers and some of Ivan's men should seep into the town the next two days, gradually in small groups to escape suspicion, and look the position over. Then when the time came the train and the rest of them would attack.

Why did Ivan think then with sudden longing of Valya, the big sailor? He liked Pavel Pavlovich and had full trust in him, but somehow he found himself wishing that Valya were here instead of this man. The long discussion had tired him. He felt dull and sleepy—it was tiring to talk so much. What had Valya said? "You can think, but I just act." He was tired of thinking and he wished Valya were there. Nichevo—tomorrow was another day and he was tired and sleepy. Why bother about Valya, training men back there in Petersburg. Valya would come one day and then they'd show these Whites what action meant, and chase the whole lot of them into the sea.



CHAPTER XXIII

NEXT MORNING there came two Bolshevik workers from the town with news that was good and bad. "I am Gorovitz," said the tall one, "and this is my comrade Sasha. We are all that is left of our Party cell—there were sixty-five two months ago before the Whites came, but they killed the others one by one, and soon they will kill us too. This town has been against us from the start; the people are traders and rich farmers who hate the revolution. When the Whites came in half the town went out to greet them."

The White force, he said, was larger than Ivan had supposed, and its morale was fairly high. That was bad news, but what followed sounded better. "They hunted us down like rats," said Gorovitz, "and like rats, we burrowed. Sasha here was foreman of the gang that built the house which is now the White headquarters. It belongs to Kardov the banker who is very fond of wine, and the cellar runs out under the garden. They said he'd ordered a hundred thousand bottles of wine from France, but the war came and they never were delivered, so the cellar is empty. My mother and I are now living in a cottage in a corner

of the banker's garden. We hid there under cover, and we had explosives, five tons of blasting powder. If they found us we meant to fire it rather than surrender, but Sasha had a better idea because he knew the cellars. We got over the wall at night and sneaked along behind the thick shrubbery to a little hut only twenty feet from the house, where they used to keep garden tools. We pulled the floor up and dug down to the cellar—it was only a few feet—and broke in through its roof. The cellar, I told you, was empty, so we carried in our powder sack by sack, and now it's there all ready. We had vowed to avenge our comrades."

"Good God," cried Ivan, "do you mean that you've got five tons of explosives right under the White headquarters?"

Gorovitz nodded. "Yes," he said, "and the fuse is laid and ready, to burn for half a minute, time enough to run back into the corner under cover of the wall."

Ivan jumped to his feet. "That's splendid," he said. "Don't you see, Pavel Pavlovich, this is just what we want? The explosion will be our signal for attack. We'll do as we planned yesterday. We'll bring half the men into town on market day tomorrow and work them around to the strategic points; then we'll blow this mine and attack before its echoes have ceased rolling. They'll be shattered without leadership, and the train will come in in the middle of it. Oh, this makes all the difference." He caught Gorovitz by the hand. "Comrade, this is wonderful. You'll get the revenge you wanted, but it won't be a forlorn hope, and

for us, you've given us victory instead of a deadly risk."

They worked out the plan in detail, and as soon as it was dusk Ivan went off with Gorovitz and his companion. To take full advantage of this stroke of fortune he must look over the town beforehand.

They moved cautiously down a lane bordered with small wooden shacks, they crossed a wide park rounding the lake, which had begun to freeze. In the dim light Ivan made out the black mass of buildings ahead of them, with here and there a lighted window. "This is the business quarter," said Gorovitz, "right ahead of us. Follow me closely; it's dark here."

He led the way down a narrow alley, winding between stone walls. They met no one. "Here we are," said Gorovitz, "it's here. Follow me."

Ivan saw that they were facing a small yard in which there was a little low house. Gorovitz opened the gate, crossed the yard to the door, and rapped on it with his knuckles. "The garden at the back," he said, "abuts on the wall around the banker's property. That was how Sasha first got the idea of blowing those swine to bits."

The door opened cautiously on a chain. An old woman peered out, holding a candle. "It's all right, *mamasha*," said Gorovitz.

She undid the chain and let them in. "You're late, Abram Davidovich, where have you been? Where were you? I've been so anxious."

"Never mind that, Mama, better times are coming. Our comrade here has a train with guns and brave Red

soldiers. Instead of killing them and getting killed ourselves, we'll take the town tomorrow."

The old woman turned on Ivan fiercely and caught him by the arm. "They killed my other son," she said, "and my husband, hanged him in front of our house, on the other side of town. Can you beat them—are you sure of it?"

Ivan nodded and flicked his fingers. "Like that," he said. "It's easy, thanks to your son here. Now, comrade, before you show me your booby trap, let's look at the plan of the town again. I'd like to see how the land lies."

"Yes," said Gorovitz, "in my room here." He fumbled among some papers on his desk. "Ah, here it is, let's put it on the table. Now this is where your train is, out by the repair shops, and this is the road we took into town—you see the lane and the park there—and the market place is just beyond on the right, the large square by the church. And we are here, further to the left, just at the point of my pencil. And this is the railway station, about half a mile away, down this boulevard, and right near it the barracks where the White troops are."

Ivan saw it now. They'd been working with the plan all afternoon, but here on the spot he got a clearer picture of the town. "Yes," he said, "that's good. Then we'll have groups of men at these points marked with crosses and we'll fire the mine at three-thirty, as we said. They'll be sitting down to dinner, their last dinner, and the men will be eating in the barracks too.

"The burst will give the signal, and our groups at all these points will concentrate, shooting, towards the center.

"The barracks commander will call headquarters here for orders and get no answer, because they'll all be killed by the explosion. But he'll hear the shooting as well, so he's bound to rush men down the boulevard, thinking the attack is on this side. Pavel Pavlovich will be there with the train by that time, and he'll take them in the rear. We'll catch them between hammer and anvil and smash them to bits."

"Yes, and take no prisoners," said the old woman, "except one for me to hang where they hanged my husband, and one more for me to cut his throat as they cut my son's throat."

"All right," said Ivan. "Now let's see your rathole."

Like shadows they crept down the little garden at the back of the house until Ivan felt the ladder propped against the ten-foot wall. They sat on the wall, pulled the ladder up and lowered it to the other side. It was pitch dark beneath the pine trees.

"Hold on to my coat," said Gorovitz, "and make no noise. I know the way—it's only twenty yards."

Their feet made no sound on the damp leaves close to the wall behind the screen of bushes. "It's here," Gorovitz whispered, and Ivan felt before him the damp wood of the hut's door.

Gorovitz pulled it open. "Hold it," he said, "while I lift up the flooring. I'll go first and make a light—they can't see it in the house."

He lit a candle and Ivan found himself on the edge of a narrow hole sliding down into the darkness. Gorovitz stood at the bottom holding the candle, behind him a low black opening, jagged with broken brick. Ivan crept down into the pit.

"This is the side of the cellar," said Gorovitz. "Sasha knew it to a foot. We dug this hole and broke the cellar wall. Come on, Ill show you."

They tiptoed through the cellar. Its whitewashed walls were foul with cobwebs and the air was dank and cold. They came to a big wooden door with a key in it, which Gorovitz turned cautiously. Five yards of passage, and they were in a low square room with a stone staircase at the further end. A little to the right of the staircase lay a heap of sacks, piled man-high against the wall.

"That's the powder," Gorovitz whispered. "See the fuse here," he held forward the candle; "it runs back to the hole where we came in. The dining room is right above us."

"Yes," said Ivan, "they won't know what hit them. But where does the fuse come out?"

"Behind the middle brick under the door of the hut. Ill show you when we get back. The brick keeps it dry, and I've only to lift it out and touch a match to the fuse."

"Suppose they had caught you working," said Ivan, "heard noises in the cellar and come to investigate?"

Gorovitz shrugged his shoulders. "We were quiet as rats, I told you, and there were chances we had to take.

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We've been taking a double chance, really, that's why we were pressed for time. It's only a matter of time before they trace us to the cottage. This town's too small, you know. They're bound to trace us sooner or later, so we had to work quickly, just take chances and dig the hole. Of course any one of them might come nosing round in the bushes there, or they might trace us to the cottage, but what do we care for that? Our lives are forfeit anyway, and you see they hanged my father and I saw him dead. An old man he was and never did harm to anyone, never cared for politics. They hanged him because of me—I was hidden, and they couldn't find me. Next day I saw him, hanging with his tongue out. His tongue was blue and his face was blue; I hardly knew him. And they killed my brother, too.

"But now they'll go up in smoke, in smoke and flame and noise, as if they'd been struck by thunder. Wait, I'll go first before you." He blew out the candle.

They put the stepladder back in the kitchen, but Ivan refused the invitation of Mama Gorovitz to stay with them and eat. "I must get back to my men," he said. "Tomorrow I'll eat with you when we've beaten them."

She caught him by the arm, gripping it with bony fingers that hurt his flesh. "Tomorrow," she said, "yes, tomorrow, when we've beaten them. We shall eat well tomorrow and tomorrow I shall sleep."

It was eight o'clock before they reached the train. There was a north wind blowing and a thin dry flurry

of snow. "I hope it's like this tomorrow," said Gorovitz, as they parted. "It will make things easier for us. All right then, it's all settled. I'll fire the mine at three-thirty. Better wait till they're sitting at dinner, so it may be a little later. The blast will be your signal."

"What about you," said Ivan, "after you light the fuse?"

"Half a minute is plenty. I'll run back behind the bushes and lie flat in the corner under cover of the wall." His lips drew back from his teeth in a grin like a snarling wolf. "There might be falling stones, you know, because what goes up comes down."

In the morning one of the sentries shook Ivan by the arm. "Wake up, comrade commander. Wake up, the man is dying. He insists on speaking to you before he dies."

Ivan stared at him. "What do you mean?" he said. "What man?"

"Our comrade who came yesterday, the little one. Sasha the other called him, I don't know his name. They've shot him and he's dying, but he wants to see you, and we have a prisoner too."

Ivan left his bunk. Sasha? That was Gorovitz's companion, the little silent man who'd been with him the day before.

"Where is he? What's happened, and what is this talk of a prisoner?"

"I don't know," said the sentry. "They laid him here

in a freight car in the yard, bleeding like a stuck pig, and told me to run for you. Look, it's here—you can see the torches."

Ivan ran through the snow to the torchlight. It was dark, not six o'clock. The door of the freight car was open, and round it a little group. He recognized one of his sergeants, standing by a prisoner with white armband, whose hands and feet were bound.

"What's this, Vassya?" he cried. "What's happened?"

"Never mind that, comrade commander, I'll tell you later. Speak quickly to this other one. He's dying."

On the floor of the freight car with his head on a sack of potatoes lay the man called Sasha, so little and white and wan, so drained of blood, that silent man who had said nothing the day before. But now he was compelled to speak before his mouth was closed forever.

Ivan bent close to his lips. "They got us," the man whispered, "late last night—after midnight—killed Gorovitz and the old woman—caught us in a trap."

"Did they find the hole under the hut?" asked Ivan. "Did they find the hole?"

He bent closer for the answer. "I don't think so—they came in the front door—I escaped and they chased me—they followed close—I ran—I went on running—but they caught me—near here they shot and hit me—then your men—"

His body heaved as he fought for speech, and he raised his hand. He could not speak. A spurt of blood

from his lips, his hand waved in the air, and he went back.

Ivan turned to the sergeant. "Well," he said, "he gave us his message, didn't he? Now what do you have to say? And who is he?" He jerked his thumb towards the prisoner. "Where did you find him, Vassya?"

"It's like this, comrade commander. I was then on patrol duty a mile down the road towards the town with my squad and a machine gun, when we started shooting, quite close. The snow had cleared then and there was light from the moon. It was half-past eight. We saw him, this dead one I mean, running towards us across the field and five others following, hot on his hounds after a hare. We'd sheltered under the haystacks to keep out of the snow.

"He came running klipity-klop, one foot, then the other foot, you know, as if he was drunk. Misha here caught him by my arm and said, 'Vassya, I know that fellow, that's the comrade who was up yesterday with the sergeant and the other man from the town. I'd know those pants of his amongst a million.'

" 'You're right, Misha,' I said, 'and he's a friend of ours and the others are after him.'

"So I swung the gun around and let them have it. It burst. It knocked four of them cold and this prisoner went down too, but he isn't hurt; there isn't a scratch on him, but he went down flat when he heard the bullets.

"The little man staggered up to us, he was alive, and there was blood coming from his mouth, but

choked it down. "Take me to the commander," he said, "take me quick. They've got me, but I must speak to him. Never mind if you hurt me. God damn you, take me."

"So we carried him as fast as we could and put him in the car; I didn't dare carry him further. I thought he'd die on our hands. He kept gasping, 'Get the commander.' So we put him here and sent Misha to run for you. And we brought this other along."

"You did well, Vassya," said Ivan, "damn well. It's lucky he lived to tell me. And now we'll talk to this one."

He stepped back to the prisoner and hit him in the face. "Who are you, you Goddamned bastard? It's your turn now to talk, I'll make you talk." His voice was hard. "Send a man ahead," he ordered the sergeant, "to wake the company commander, Pavel Pavlovich, and tell him to have the water heated in the boiler of our car." He hit the man again. "You'll talk to me, you White Guard. Come on, bring him along. We'll teach him how to talk."

Ivan was cold with fury as he trudged back through the freight yard to his car. What infernal luck that this should happen at the last minute! It upset the whole plan of attack. Or did it? What did he say before he died, this Sasha? That they hadn't found the ladder or the hole under the hut? Why should they think of that, they were chasing Gorovitz, why should they think further? Well, perhaps the prisoner could tell him, and he'd make him tell.

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"Hoist him up here," he ordered, as they reached the car, "and don't mind if you bump his elbow. Bring him here in the compartment next to the boiler. How long will it take to get that water hot? All right then, keep him here while I speak to Pavel Pavlovich."

In quick angry phrases he told his subordinate what had happened. "They got the lot of them," he said, "they shot them all, but the little man lived long enough to tell me part of it. He had guts, that little fellow. Now I'll tackle this soldier, I'll frighten the words out of him. We may still pull it off, if they haven't found the hole under the hut.

"Hey, Vassya," he shouted, "take that fellow out of the compartment there and bring him here. Before you bring him, rub his nose on the furnace, and let a little hot water from the boiler trickle on his hands."

They heard the man screaming. "That'll teach him," said Ivan. "The more it hurts the quicker he'll talk."

Then they brought the prisoner in. "Let him loose," he said. "Cut the cords round his wrists and ankles. Now you, stand there in the corner, we've got you, do you know that? And if you don't talk straight and quick you'll die badly. Your own mother won't know you when we've done with you. Do you understand me?"

The man sucked his wounded hands. There were blisters on the backs of them where the water had scalded them. He looked at Ivan. "Let me alone," he mumbled, "I never hurt you. Why do you treat me like this? Why can't you let me alone?"

"God damn you, stand up!" Ivan shouted. "How dare you speak back to me!" The man's face was swollen where he'd hit him. His lips and nose were bleeding; Ivan had hit him hard.

He rose to his feet and stood rigid, all his body was rigid, but his hands by his sides were twitching. The fingers moved with a small fluttering movement, and his eyes were turned up so that they looked more white than blue. He was terrified and in anguish; his hands were palsied and trembling; he was in terror of cruel death. Ivan gave him no peace—he couldn't wait or have thought for pity. He had to know the truth.

"Stand still, I tell you," he shouted, "and keep your hands still. Don't you know what we're going to do to you and your hands? Did you feel the boiling water—did it hurt? Unless you tell us the truth, the whole truth and all the truth, we'll take your hands and dip them slowly in the boiling water, so slowly, inch by inch, and won't it hurt you?

"We'll dip your hands up to the wrists, and then we'll cut a little ring around your wrists with a small sharp knife. The skin of your hands will be cooked then, and it will hurt you, the skin of your hands will be cooked, and we'll slit the skin off your fingers and off your hands—we've done it lots of times. We know the trick all right; Bolshevik gloves they call it. Have you ever heard of that, when the skin comes off your hands like gloves, the cooked skin off your hands? It will hurt you like hell, but it won't hurt us. All it

means to us is a nice new pair of skin gloves. That's what's coming to you, my friend."

The man's eyes rolled until Ivan thought he would have a fit. Suddenly down on his knees he flopped and bent his head to Ivan's feet. "Oh, God, no, save me from the torture. I'll tell you anything. If I'm lying you can kill me. But I won't lie. I'll tell you anything, only save me from the torture."

"Now, listen," said Pavel Pavlovich, and his face was yellow. "Listen, Ivan, I can't stand this—"

"Shut up," said Ivan, "this is my show. These White Guards killed our friends; we'll teach them. I saw Sasha die. Shut up," he said, "don't talk to me—this is my show."

Inside him his heart was sick. Was it he who spoke such words to this poor devil, and to Pavel Pavlovich, his comrade? He'd never used torture in his life; he would kill but he'd never torture. But he had to know the truth.

"Get up, you sookin sin." He kicked the prisoner in the face. "Stand up and answer my questions."

What's wrong with me? he wondered. How can I be so cruel? This poor devil, he never hurt me, why should I treat him so?

There was no more anger in his heart, he was sorry for this man that he mistreated, but he had to know the truth. He sat forward with his chin on his clasped hands. "What's your name," he rasped, "and your regiment?"

"Galkin, Ivan Sergeyich, Seventh Siberian Rifles, corporal." The man's voice was dull and toneless. Ivan knew that he had beaten him, that he had broken and sapped his manhood, sucked him dry of strength and courage, drained his spirit to the bottom, and he knew the pitiless routine of the Cheka questions. Snap, snap, snap, question after question, hammer them, one hammer on another, never give them time to pause or think, hammer them to death and make them answer—that was the Cheka method. So he played it now.

"How many troops have you got here, a thousand, is that all? . . . All right then, who commands you?—What name did you say, Maklovski?—Where does he come from?—All right and when did he come?—Last month, and when did you come?—Two months ago, that's fine. What else have you got here, how many guns, cannon I mean?—Oh, yes, how many machine guns?—How many rifles, what munitions?"

The man was broken now, drugged by terror. There was no more spirit in him.

"All right," said Ivan, "but why did you shoot my comrades? The one you killed in the little house and his old mother—how did you know of that?"

The prisoner told him simply. He was beyond fear now, as if hypnotized, and his hands no longer fluttered. He didn't think, he only answered.

"Word came to us—I don't know why—at midnight today they told me. Take six men, they said, and arrest those bloody Reds—it's a little house that backs on

the wall of our garden—if they resist, shoot them—go ahead and do it quickly—those were my orders.”

He stood stiffly in front of Ivan, but his eyes were calm and there was no movement of his hands.

“So you killed them?” Ivan said. “And one got away from you and you chased him?”

“Yes,” said the man, “we chased and we shot him. He ran ahead of us like a wounded chicken; we expected him to fall and we ran after him to catch him. And your men fired machine guns. I fell flat on my face to dodge the bullets, and your men caught me—that was all.”

“But what did you see in the house,” asked Ivan, “the house where you killed my comrade and his mother? Did you search it?”

“We had no orders for that,” said the soldier. “There was no word of searching—they told us, ‘Arrest or kill them.’ That is all I know.”

He fell suddenly on his knees; he fell bumping as if he was made of wood, and bowed his head in Ivan’s lap. “I’ve told the truth,” he muttered, “I swear to God I’ve told the truth. Have pity, I tell you that I’ve told the truth.”

Ivan pushed him back, not roughly. He lay on the floor of the compartment and lay there and didn’t move. His eyes were shut and he lay there without moving.

“By God, Ivan, you’re hard,” said Pavel Pavlovich. “I believe you’ve killed him.”

“Don’t be silly,” said Ivan. “He’s asleep, can’t you

see that? I didn't kill him but I wore him out; he's exhausted and now he's sleeping. Did you never see that before, how men get when they're worn out? But he can't sleep yet; I've got to hear some more. Do you know what this means, comrade, this thing that just has happened? Well, I'll tell you; it means I'll have to blow that mine myself—that's the only answer."

Pavel Pavlovich jumped to his feet. "What?" he cried. "You're crazy, you can't do it."

"I don't like it either, but there's no choice. There's no one else who knows. It's all set and waiting and I'm the only one who knows. I've got to do it, surely you see that, so let's kick this fool awake and make him talk some more."

Pavel Pavlovich tried to argue, but the facts were stronger. If they could fire the mine and destroy the White headquarters, the advantage was so clear that no argument was possible. Ivan alone could do it, he must do it. There was no other way.

He shook the White soldier awake and made him stand and speak. "Who've you got there in the house?" he asked him. "Tell me about it—tell me one by one, because I have to know."

The soldier told him. "There's a general," he said, "Maklovski—I spoke of him before—and a colonel, I said that too—and eighteen other officers—and forty orderlies or so. Then, too, there are the women, the old lady whose husband owned the house—we don't see much of her—and her sister, she's old, too, and looks after the kitchen—she's a tiger, that one. I kissed

one of the maids one night—a pretty girl, Lenusha they called her—and she caught me at it. And the old girl saw me and complained to the general—what a row that was!” He spoke like a man in his sleep who didn’t know what he was saying, babbling answers to the questions, not caring what he said.

“Yes,” said Ivan, “and the others?”

“Oh, there is the colonel’s wife, and the girl who came with her. They live upstairs on the second floor—they only came six days ago. The colonel’s wife is fat, with yellow hair, a big fat woman. She laughed when she heard about me and Lenusha and said, ‘Oh, why make such a fuss? Why not let them have a good time if they want it?’ She said, ‘I’ve lived all my life with soldiers. My father was a soldier and my grandfather—there have been soldiers in our house all my life, and they always flirt with the housemaids. That’s their nature, and what of it? Don’t be silly, Cousin Sophie,’ she said, ‘soldiers always kiss the housemaids.’ ”

The man’s voice was droning, he spoke as if he was asleep. “Yes,” he said, “and the other girl, the young one who came with the colonel’s wife, there was something funny about her. She came to join her brother, the captain in the Guards. She was pale as if she had been sick, and they talked about her—I don’t know what they said, but it seemed there was some scandal. Lenusha told me—something about a man—they were trying to elope or something—Lenusha didn’t know the story. A tall girl, pale, with short-cut hair and burning

eyes. They didn't like her much, the rest of them—I don't know why—there had been some scandal. What do I know? I've told you all I can—why can't you let me sleep?"

Ivan asked him four more questions—how to get into the house and through what entrance, and what the password was, and how the passages went through the house towards the garden, and who was officer of watch that afternoon.

The man told him and Ivan knew he told the truth. He called for Sergeant Vassya. "Take and strip him," he said, "and put him to bed and let him sleep—he's tired. At noon bring me his clothes; I'll need them. Now, Pavel Pavlovich, we must talk together, you and I."



CHAPTER XXIV

IVAN KNEW WHAT HE WANTED and he wore his comrade down. "Can't you see we've got no choice? Of course, if Gorovitz hadn't been caught or if the little Sasha had lived—but now there's no one to do it but me. I'll take the prisoner's uniform, this fellow we've been talking to, and I'll sneak into the house with that. The other place is hopeless, the little cottage where Gorovitz lived—they'll surely have a guard there—but I'll sneak into the big house where headquarters are and bluff my way through. You know what the Whites are like; their discipline's so slack I can do it easily. I'll slide through the house and out to the hut where the fuse is hidden. I'll put a red armlet in my pocket," he said, "and when I've fired the mine I'll meet you near the station. You'll come along in the train and advance from the boulevard—that's the plan, isn't it? Well, when you get to the corner opposite the statue of Peter, I'll be there to meet you. Then we'll take what's left of their troops between two fires. It's easy, I tell you."

Pavel Pavlovich rubbed the bristles on his cheek. "I

suppose you're right," he said, "and you're the chief, Ivan Petrovich, but it's hellish risky."

At that it didn't look so risky as they talked it over. The prisoner had given them the names; Ivan could use the names. "I'll be carrying a message," he said, "from Colonel Bervitz at the barracks to General Maklovski at headquarters—that's what I'll tell them. I'll have some routine message typed out to show anyone who gets inquisitive. Then all I have to do is mix with the crowd and pick my chance to slip out to the garden."

Ivan had his way. They worked the plan over again and decided it was watertight. When the explosion came the attack in the town would begin and the train would advance to the station. Ivan would join Pavel Pavlovich and the train force at the corner by the station. If the explosion was so violent that he was injured or couldn't join them, it wouldn't matter. They weren't to wait for him if he wasn't there, just charge ahead and take the town and look for him afterwards.

"But I'm sure it will be all right," he said. "The fuse burns half a minute, which will give me time to get away. I'll be there, Pavel Pavlovich, at the corner, waiting for you. So long, comrade, that's one thing you can count on. I'll be there."

He went off in the prisoner's uniform, the blood singing in his veins. What fun life was, and fighting. What fun to take risks and bluff the enemy, and blow them to pieces and capture this town against odds.

It was three-fifteen when he reached the White headquarters from the direction of the station. He had timed it carefully—of course, he could hide in the bushes once he got there, but the shorter his waiting the less the risk.

The front door of the house was in the main street of the town, a square stone porch with sentries.

"A message for General Maklovski from the colonel at the barracks. It's urgent," Ivan told them. "Where can I find the general?"

"Straight down the hall," said the sentry, "staircase on the right. He's on the first floor; you will find the orderly on the landing."

"Thanks," said Ivan.

It was a long low building, only two stories, in the French style. Across the wide hall ahead of him he could see the garden on the other side, with windows opening on a terrace. If only it was summer and the terrace doors were open, how easy that would be, just walk straight through and down into the garden and round to the shrubbery on the left. But now these window doors would be locked most probably, and he might give himself away if he went to try them. No, the best thing was to get down to the left here, down this passage, and take a chance on finding an exit door.

A man checked him in the passage, a big fellow with captain's bars on his shoulder and the cross of St. George on his breast. "What do you want?" he said. "Where are you going?"

Ivan saluted smartly. "A message for General Maklovski. They said he was in the dining room—I come from the barracks—they told me down this passage."

"Yes, straight ahead, the door at the end there. Are you sure the general's there?"

"That's what they told me upstairs," said Ivan, "and my message is urgent." He saluted and walked on quickly. He went on down the passage and opened the dining-room door.

It was a big room with high raftered ceiling and French windows on the right that opened on the terrace. Across the room opposite him was a door which evidently led to the kitchen and the servants' quarters. That was his goal, clearly; once there he could make his way into the garden. But would they stop him here?

A little group of officers stood near the window. They were deep in discussion and took no notice of Ivan as he walked quietly across the room towards the other door.

"You are quite wrong, my dear fellow," he heard one of them say, a tall slim captain. "Sardanapale was the finest horse that ever ran in Europe. Nina Lvovna and I saw him win at Longchamps. You ask her when she comes in."

With his hand on the doorknob Ivan halted, startled. He knew that voice, he couldn't mistake it—it was Count Mikhail, the Young Master of his childhood.

One of the others answered: "Perhaps you are right, Misha, but he never was properly tested; he never ran at Ascot."

Ivan opened the door into a narrow stone passage and met a pretty housemaid with a tray, who smiled at him. "Move aside, soldier, don't block the gangway. Where do you come from? I've not seen you before."

Ivan looked at her blankly. "General Maklovski, I have a message for him."

"You won't find him here. This is the way to the kitchen and then on to the garden."

"They told me he was out there," Ivan muttered, and made way for her. Breathing deeply he hurried along the passage. There was a small door at the end, half wood, half glass; it wasn't locked. Beyond it he saw four steps to a gravel path, powdered white with snow, and the thick shrubbery of evergreens which hid the hut. Triumph sang in his veins as he shut the door behind him and jumped down to the path. And there was a girl in a bright blue frock, with a silver fox fur on her arm. It was Nina Lvovna and she knew him instantly.

For a moment they both stood staring. Her face was white, but Ivan felt the blood flush crimson to his forehead.

"Vanusha," she gasped, "Vanusha, what are you doing here? I can't understand it. I went to get my fur," she added inconsequently. "I had left it on the garden seat."

Without a thought he caught her and kissed her

passionately. "Ninushka, my darling—to find you here—I heard Misha speak of you, but I never thought—Oh, Ninushka, my dearest."

She kissed him, too, and her arms were clasped about his neck. "I've missed you always, Vanusha, but I knew you would find me somewhere. And now you've come at last."

"Yes, yes," he said, "I've found you. But we can't talk here; they might see us. Come this way." He drew her through the bushes to the door of the little hut.

Panting, she clung to him. "Vanusha, how did you find me? I've wanted you so much." His arm was round her and her lips were hot and sweet beneath his own, as they sat on the damp brown leaves against the wall. But his right hand was feeling for the middle brick beneath the door, sliding it out—so easily—and behind it the limp dry end of the fuse. His brain leapt in dazzling flashes, faster than light—I've got her here, my darling Nina. . . . What did Druzak say, no double motives?—Dostoevsky knew better—I've got her here, and this fuse between my fingers—Oh God, how much I love her!—This time I will keep her—and I'll fire the mine as well.

All that he thought in a second, then put his right arm round her and said: "Are you happy, darling, that I've found you now once more?"

She made a small purring noise like a kitten and snuggled her head under his chin. "I'm so happy that I could die, Vanusha. How did you do it, how did you know that I?—"

"Because I love you, because I—" Again his thoughts were spinning like fireworks in his brain, but back of them a deeper thought, the purpose that he followed. "We've got to talk this over," he said calmly. "Do you want a cigarette?"

He took the lighter from his pocket. A touch and the spark caught the yellow wick and made it red. He lighted her cigarette and another for himself, but he didn't extinguish the lighter; he held the glowing wick in his right hand six inches from the fuse.

"We must talk this over," he said. "You ran away from me too quick that night in Moscow, but now we have time to talk."

She was limp in his embrace. He felt no resistance in her body, and he could see the watch on his left wrist—it was half-past three. She fingered his white armlet. "What is this, Vanusha? You have joined us?" she cried incredulously. "You've done this too for me?"

How sweet and dear her voice was and what music in his ears! "Of course not," he said harshly, "that is nothing, just a trick to get here. I took it from one of your soldiers. Don't you know, Nina, that I'm a Bolshevik and what that means? Now listen," he said, "I'll tell you. Do you think I came here to find you? Well, I didn't, it isn't true. I came here to blow up this house, this headquarters of yours, to kill them all, your brother and the rest of them. I've got a fuse here under my hand that will blow the house to pieces in half a minute, and a glowing wick to fire it. There is nothing that can stop me."

For a moment she eyed him blankly. "I don't understand," she said. "I thought you came to find me, and now—" Her lips were trembling.

"You've got to understand," he said. "I came to kill them and to give my troops the signal to attack the town. I didn't know you were here at all until I heard your brother speak of you. I thought you were at home on your father's property."

"You can't do it," she cried fiercely. "Vanusha, I won't let you. Give me that thing at once." She threw herself upon him, struggling to seize his hand.

He held her away and pressed the glowing wick against the fuse. He felt the sparks fizzle, burning his thumb and finger. "I can't do it, can't I? Well, I've done it. And with you, too, I'll do what I want. You're mine now, and you'll do what I tell you always from this minute onward."

He sprang to his feet and picked her up like a child. "Keep still," he cried. "Don't struggle or you'll kill us both. Keep still, there is death here under our feet."

But she fought him, screaming, tearing his face with her nails and twisting her legs around the nearest tree. "All right then," he snapped, and raised his arm to strike her, when they were both hurled back as if by a charging bull, and the big captain whom Ivan had met in the passage held him powerless in his hands.

"Kill him," she gasped, "he's a Red, he—"

"I guessed it," the captain shouted. "Thank God, Nina Lvovna, that I heard you scream."

He took Ivan by the shoulders and braced his body to dash him against the wall.

"You're too late," said Ivan. "Good-by, Ninushka, it was silly of you to scream."

Pavel Pavlovich sat perched on the branch of a fir tree fifty feet above the station yard. "It's due now," he said, "it's after half-past three," and tucked back the silver watch into his pocket. For the twentieth time he peered through the field glasses. His fingers were shaking and damp with sweat despite the cold. Far off in the distance he saw a column of smoke rise tall as a pillar and spread like a great black mushroom. One—two—three—then the echoes of the blast, rolling thunder. "By God," he cried, "he's done it!" and slid shouting down the tree.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WALTER DURANTY, Moscow correspondent of The New York Times since 1920, says that he first heard of Russia at the age of four when his nurse took him to a fair in his native Lancashire and they witnessed a rough-and-tumble Russian comedy. It was a significant omen, for Mr. Duranty's subsequent career both in Russia and elsewhere has been a succession of adventures.

During the War he served as newspaper correspondent on the Western Front where he got such a baptism of fire that nothing he saw afterwards in the Soviet Union made him turn a hair. In 1919 Mr. Duranty was holding down a dull job as "second man" in the Paris office of The New York Times when he was suddenly assigned to accompany Commander Gade, the newly appointed American High Commissioner to the Baltic states, as correspondent for that whole area. From the Baltic states he moved to Moscow where, unlike many foreign correspondents, he mastered the language and thus won the friendship of the Soviet leaders.

Mr. Duranty has twice interviewed Stalin and accompanied Litvinov to the United States when Soviet-American relations were resumed in the fall of 1933. He has covered all the important news stories from Russia since Hoover's American Relief Association ministered to the famine sufferers after the War and Revolution. He has met all the important visitors to Moscow during the past seventeen years and is the author of *I Write As I Please*.

ONE LIFE, ONE KOPECK is a novel that will tell American readers more about Russia and Russians than will years of reading newspaper dispatches and magazine articles. It is Walter Duranty's first novel.

This is the life story of a handsome young peasant called Ivan Petrovitch. Born in utter squalor, Ivan eventually becomes a leader among the Bolsheviki. His story is a violent one, because it takes place in violent times—during the greatest upheaval in world history. It is a romantic one, too—that is, if the reader believes it romantic to be a Bolshevik, as Ivan is, and at the same time be in love with Nina, a White Russian.

Whether in sympathy with revolution or not, readers will agree with John Gunther that it is impossible to lay *One Life, one Kopeck* down until the very last

paragraph. The book plunges into action on the first few pages with Ivan's exile to Siberia, through no fault of his own, at the age of fifteen. Then follow his conversion to Bolshevism, his adventures in the Tsar's army during the first two years of the war, his desertion and assumption of a false name in a munitions factory in Moscow, where he engages in underground revolutionary activities.

The second half of the book tells of Ivan's rise to a position of authority against the background of the Civil War. But more important is the emergency of a hardened, uncompromising revolutionary out of the peasant boy. In the final dramatic denouement, the acid test of love fails to corrode the purity of the revolutionary spirit.

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